

THE
DAWN
OF THE
SCARLET AGE



Edgar Ainslie

Studies in the Book of REVELATION

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DEDICATION

TO THE MEMORY OF MY DEAR SON

EDGAR SAMUEL AINSLIE

who, through paying the "Supreme Sacrifice" for his country in World War II, entered into the presence of his Lord and Saviour on April 11, 1944, in Finschhafen, New Guinea, Southern Pacific.

In the box containing his belongings, sent home by the U. S. Government from New Guinea, his mother found an unfinished letter, the last he would ever write, probably written shortly before his death. In this letter he wrote:

"I have been humming all day that hymn:

'I wonder if I have given my best for Jesus,
Who died upon the cruel tree . . .

To think of His great sacrifice at Calvary,
I know my Lord expects the best from me.'"

PREFACE

There has been considerable disposition in Christian circles in recent years to teach that living, born-again believers will have to pass through at least a part of the Great Tribulation which will come upon the earth prior to the time of the Lord's Second Advent. Many earnest Bible students, however, are convinced from the Word that the true Church will be caught out to meet her Lord in the air before these terrible days come, and thus will escape the awful judgments of a righteous God that will break upon the rebellious, Christ-rejecting, and blasphemous nations of earth.

The author of this book, Mr. Edgar Ainslie, is one of those who, with *THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES* and with many outstanding Christian leaders, holds that the true Church will not have to pass through the Great Tribulation. But he also is convinced that Christians need to be informed as to just what the Scriptures have to say about this time of Jacob's trouble and about the glorious events that will follow it, and that they need to learn the many valuable lessons that are found in the Book of Revelation in which these events are portrayed.

Mr. Ainslie carefully avoids date-setting, the sensational, and mere speculation. He sticks closely to the Word. He exalts the Lord Jesus Christ. His studies have many lessons and warnings for the present even as they speak of the future. His book contains the articles that appeared in twenty-four issues of *THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES*, from March 13 to September 4, 1954. These in turn were condensed from a series of lectures presented across the country in many of

the Assemblies known as the Plymouth Brethren. Mr. Ainslie is a former member of the staff of Purdue University and taught physical metallurgy to engineering students for some years in that institution.

You will get a blessing for your own heart and a deeper knowledge of the Lord Jesus, as well as a clearer picture of the end times, as you read Mr. Ainslie's comments on the only book in the Bible that promises a special blessing for those who read, and hear, and keep "the words of this prophecy" (Rev. 1:3).

JOHN W. LANE, JR.,

Associate Editor, The Sunday School Times

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FOREWORD

Feeling deeply indebted to the Editors of *The Sunday School Times*, I send forth the following lectures on "The Dawn of the Scarlet Age" with the earnest desire that they may be blessed to the glory of God, the exaltation of His precious Son, the edification of all God's dear children everywhere, and the salvation of many precious souls.

EDGAR AINSLIE

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CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF REVELATION

FEATURES THAT ARE PECULIAR TO THE LAST BOOK OF THE BIBLE

We should study the Book of Revelation for the following reasons:

First. Because it is the only portion of the Bible that promises blessing to the one that *reads*—for the eye; *hears*—for the ear; *keeps*—for the heart. Of course there is a blessing in the reading of any portion of God's Word, but here is promised a special blessing (Rev. 1:3).

Second. Because it has a special significance today as we are nearing the end of this dispensation. All wide-awake Christians must realize that we are in the last hours of this age; the sands in its hourglass are running very low. The Lord is at hand.

Third. Because it sets forth in a special way our Lord Jesus as no other book does. His representations here are many; His offices varied; His characters so glorious.

Fourth. Because the outstanding events of the near future, especially of Daniel's seventieth prophetic week, cannot be properly understood without knowing the Book of Revelation. These are the strange movements of Satan in the final windup of the "times of the Gentiles."

Fifth. Because Satan is very anxious to keep us away from it. He hates it, and there is a good reason why: *because the Book reveals his doom by utter defeat by the Man Child.*

Portions of Scripture that should be read and studied with this Book are:

The entire Book of Daniel. For the prophetical side.

The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew.

The Book of Zechariah.

Various portions in the Old Testament dealing with the Tabernacle and Temple, to understand its symbols. Its symbolism can never be fully understood unless Old Testament Books such as Exodus and Leviticus and the Books which record the construction of Solomon's Temple are read.

There are about fifty symbols in this Book, usually they are explained in the Book itself.

THINGS THAT ARE PECULIAR TO REVELATION

First. It is the only distinctive prophetic portion in the New Testament. The four Gospels are history. The Epistles are doctrine. Revelation is prophetic.

Second. In the Gospel of John the deity of Jesus Christ is emphasized before His cross; in Revelation the manhood of Jesus is emphasized after His cross. Both are written by the same writer, John, A.D. 96.

Third. It is a book of endings: The end of Church history, day of grace, Church pilgrimage, Gentile dominion, Babylon the great, Satan's misrule, war, Jewish persecution, sin, tears, sorrow, death.

Fourth. In the Epistles, grace is paramount, grace is reigning. In Revelation, grace has left the throne and justice has ascended and taken its place. It is the public, governmental dealing with the world by God, as the sovereign Ruler, enforcing holiness and laying in the dust the enemies of righteousness.

Fifth. It is the Apocalypse or the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sixth. It is the only Book that pronounces a special blessing upon its readers.

Seventh. It is the only Book that is written specially for *servants*. It is because this has been overlooked that trouble has arisen. Service is emphasized in the churches, in Israel, and in the world at large; in time and throughout eternity (22:3). Angels serve. Israel serves. Creation serves. The churches serve. The seer serves, and even demons serve under divine restraint (chap. 9). The kings of earth serve, though unwittingly (17:17). The highest known angelic intelligences, the living creatures, serve. They become in judgment the executors of the wrath of God (chap. 6). Though throughout this Book everything seems to be running contrary to the will of Almighty God, behind the iron curtain the great consummation or goal is calmly and majestically being kept in sight—the gathering together “in one all things in Christ” (Eph. 1:10).

REVELATION'S RELATION TO VARIOUS PERSONS AND PERIODS

We should notice that Revelation is related to several persons and periods.

It is related to Jesus Christ: His person; His many offices: Prophet, Priest, King, Judge, Kinsman, Redeemer, Administrator, the Lamb, Treader of the Winepress, Bridegroom, Warrior, Shepherd.

It is related to the Church: The seven local churches of Asia represent a panoramic view of the Church age: Its failure, history, rewards, rapture, status in Heaven, in the millennium and eternity.

It is related to Israel: How God is to take Israel up after the Church is raptured; her godly remnant; her time

of Jacob's trouble; her false Messiah; apostasy, deliverance; restoration and reign.

It is related to Satan: Tells of his last great movements to gain the coveted prize, the sovereignty of the world; his master strokes; his counterfeits; his king, messiah, and church; his falls, defeats, imprisonments, release, final revolt, and final doom in the lake of fire.

It is related to time and eternity: The end of time is recorded. Genesis records the dawn of time; Revelation the dawn of eternity. It links the day of grace with the day of wrath. The time covered includes: The day of grace, the day of the Lord, the day of Christ, and the day of God. Here we close the book of *time* and open the book of *eternity*. Ere we close the Book of Revelation we are found standing on the shore of a future eternity in which God shall be all and in all. The destinies of men and of angels are forever fixed, and countless, eternal years roll on.

PARENTHETICAL PORTIONS

There are parenthetical portions that should be read and studied if a proper understanding of this Book is to be accomplished. The main subject is left, and a digression is made explaining the events or persons acting behind the scenes.

The first parenthetical portion occurs in chapter 7 after the breaking of the sixth seal. The sixth seal having been broken by the Lamb, we are now introduced by the Holy Spirit to what God is doing behind the scenes during the time that the seal judgments are happening on the earth. God never leaves Himself without a witness on earth; and when He has removed His Church to Heaven and her testimony for Him has ceased, when the seven stars of Asia have failed and faded out in the blackness of apostasy, God will not be slack, but will raise up again a people to hold the

beacons of His truth amid the appalling midnight gloom that covers the earth. Israel is seen again in the forefront; not all Israel but a godly remnant, the 144,000 who stand nobly for God and His Son while the world is under the judgment of the seven seals; their testimony results in the greatest soul-winning revival the world has ever known. Confined to the seven prophetic years, one can readily see this masterpiece of soul-winning as recorded in chapter 7, verses 9 to 17.

Study very carefully the outline of these six broken seals (chap. 6), then seek to understand the setting of the Jewish remnant and the hosts saved through their ministry. This will spare anyone from the wild and fantastic claims of these apostate cults who say they belong to the 144,000. The presence on earth of the Church forbids anyone belonging to this company, which is strictly Jewish and cannot appear till the Lamb begins to break the seals after His coronation in the highest glories of Heaven.

Seal One. The white horse gallops across the stage of time. This world conqueror brings to the world a mock millennium without the shedding of blood. Such is the master stroke of the counterfeit prince of peace. The Devil's imitation of the true millennium of the true Prince of Peace.

Seal Two. Universal war. The demon rider of the red horse swiftly follows in the path of the Devil's mock millennium. This cruel, heartless monarch robs the earth of its peace, and when men shall be boasting of peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them.

Seal Three. Universal famine appears to race madly across a stricken world which is drenched in human blood and fears. Appalling scenes of unparalleled horrors now become the common order of the day. Untold millions are slowly starved to death by this dark demon rider of famine.

Seal Four. The king of terrors now makes his advent

upon this ghastly scene. He has four dreadful agencies to scourge this abandoned world: The sword, hunger, death, and beasts. He symbolizes universal pestilence riding with feverish haste across the prophetic earth. Confined to his appointed sphere of one fourth of the earth, he has a partner who gleaned the fields of his atrocities; that partner is hell. All victims are quickly transported to that prison house of lost souls, Hades or Sheol.

Seal Five. The holy martyrs now are seen and heard from. Their bodies slain by execution, they are not extinct; death does not end all. They are seen after natural death in the disembodied state, very much alive. They plead to justice to avenge their murders, but are told to wait a little longer.

Seal Six. The day of wrath has at last dawned. The face of God is at last revealed, and the greatest prayer meeting the world has ever known takes place; not to God, but to inanimate nature, to rocks, in dens, in the rocks of the mountains. That dreadful face is now unveiled.

Notice no seventh seal is broken, but we are drawn aside to know what is happening to God's people: His witnesses, Israel and her faithful, godly remnant. God is always more concerned about His people and their welfare than with world empires and world events.

Now the first parenthetical portion appears. Emphasis must be given again to the identity of this company. They are not in existence at this present time; such is the clear setting of prophecy. To claim that any of these 144,000 exist today is sheer nonsense and a violent twisting of the plain statements of Scripture. This kind of reasoning gives birth to apostate cults and isms of today. They are not the Church. The Church, the Bride of Christ, has been removed to Heaven (4:1). They are a select company of Israel, an election of grace, whose hearts have been wrought upon by

the Spirit of God, and as such they are sealed by God as His very own.

They go forth as His servants, and the fruit of their service is seen in the great multitude of the saved of all nations, kindreds, and people and tongues.

This parenthetical portion throws light upon what God is doing while His strange work of judgment is going on in the tribulation period after the Church has gone and the Day of the Lord has come, filling the world with calamities and outpourings of righteous wrath.

Thus closes the first of the five great parenthetical portions which enable the student of this Book to understand what is transpiring as to the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus (1:2).

CHAPTER 2

THE TRUMPETS AND BOWLS OF REVELATION

CONTINUING A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE LAST NEW TESTAMENT BOOK

The seventh seal is now broken, and this introduces us to the seven trumpets. The hand of the glorified Lamb breaks the seals. The angels sound the trumpets.

Trumpet One sounds and hail and fire mingled with blood fall upon this stricken scene of judgment, causing devastation never before experienced by mankind, as one third of the trees and grass is burned up. The avenging of the martyrs' blood now begins; their intercession now avails (6:10).

Trumpet Two is sounded and the sea is turned into blood. There is no Branch now to change the bitter waters of Marah into sweetness (Exod. 15:23-25); or Heavenly Guest at the marriage feast to change the waters of earthly sorrow into the joys of Heaven (John 2:1-11). The burning mountain changes the blue waters of the sea into a scene of death. No life can exist in that bloody sea. Creatures, men, ships are destroyed in this trumpet judgment.

Trumpet Three now sounds and more things are falling. The great star falls; again the waters are affected. This time it comes nearer home. The cup of wrath is pressed closer to the lips of the impenitent world, wormwood bringing death to all who drink it. Man now reaps what he offered our Saviour on the cross. There was nothing too bitter for

the dear Son of God who craved a drink in His dying agonies. All He received was the wormwood and the gall, reflecting as in a mirror the hateful, bitter heart of man. Now men get a taste of Calvary, and Calvary can only mean death.

Trumpet Four sounds and the sun is now smitten, the moon, and the stars. The terrible eclipse now occurs, scourging this world with a horror of appalling darkness, the blackout of wrath.

Trumpet Five is now sounded and the stroke of judgment is heavier than all before. The pit is opened and the locust hordes of demons are now released from their prison house of darkness. These legions of that lost, doomed, and damned world now are free to pour out their demon venom in unbridled hate upon those whose brows are yet unsealed by the seal of God.

Trumpet Six now sounds and the voice from the golden altar of incense is heard commanding the release of the four imprisoned angels waiting in the great river Euphrates. These murderers now marshal the formidable hosts of two hundred million demons to slay the third part of mankind. These two hundred million horses and their demon riders now liberated are described in symbolic language, engraving upon our hearts the thought that all resistance to these fiends is useless, as these demons, described as monstrosities, prey relentlessly upon their helpless victims.

Like the seventh seal, which remained unbroken as parenthetical portion number one came in, so the seventh trumpet is not sounded till parenthetical portion number two comes in.

This second parenthetical portion recorded in chapter 10 and continuing to chapter 11:14 brings before us in anticipation the claiming of the inheritance bestowed in chapter five. The mighty Angel is generally accepted as being the Lord

Jesus who descends to claim His property. The sea and the land are His. (Compare Josh. 1:3.) The roar of the Lion of the tribe of Judah is heard and confirmed by the thunders. The brow once crowned with the curse of a ruined creation now is encircled by the glorious rainbow of covenant promise. The book once closed and sealed now lies open on His wounded hand. He is claiming the promises. There is no spittle now upon His lovely face and no cloud of sorrow. His face shines in unclouded glory, the glory of kingly sovereignty. Soon He must reign; soon His enemies lie crushed in abject defeat. The holy city now appears and God is remembering His covenant to Israel, and we are on the verge of the fateful last half of Daniel's prophetic week of years. The beast is operating in mysterious dragon power and he slays the two witnesses, and the second beast defiles the sanctuary. These and other tragedies are recorded in this second parenthetical portion.

The Seventh Trumpet sounds and the great consummation is reached. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (11:15-18); and the first great half of the Book of Revelation ends.

Chapter 12 begins the second half, revealing the dreadful actors who play their parts in the greatest drama of all the ages.

Just as chapter 5 reveals what will take place in Heaven when God crowns His Son as King of kings and Lord of lords, and to Him is given absolute sovereignty on earth, so chapter 12 reveals the striking contrast. The Dragon is now contesting the crown rights of Christ and is to perform a duplicate coronation scene on earth, when he crowns his king of kings and lord of lords.

The Dragon is the Devil, now appearing in the role of heartless cruelty and insatiable pride.

The woman is Israel, passing through the throes of painful travail—the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:15-29).

The Man Child is our Lord Jesus, who is to become absolute Ruler, Monarch of all monarchs (Psa. 2).

The archangel is Michael, Israel's great defender. He clears the heavens of its rebels (Dan. 12:1).

The Jewish remnant are those of Israel who remain loyal to Jehovah in the Great Tribulation (chap. 17; Zech. 3:8, 9).

The first Beast is the head of the Roman Empire, resurrected and Dragon-controlled (Rev. 13:1-8).

The second Beast is the personal Antichrist, later known as the false prophet (Rev. 13:11-18).

Now follows *parenthetical portion number three*. This anticipates the glorious scene soon to be when the Lamb shall stand on Mount Zion accompanied by the 144,000. They are singing and playing harps, with redeemed hearts, as they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

The fall of Babylon is next announced; then follows the warning against receiving the mark of the Beast. Next the blessedness of the holy dead is assured, those who die in the Lord. Then the visions are resumed at verse 14 of chapter 14. Now two visions are given of Armageddon. The Son of man comes down as the reaper. His brow bears the dazzling golden crown, His nail-printed hand the sharp sickle. The harvest has come. What a reaping that will be!

Now from the holy shrine in Heaven an angel comes with the sharp sickle to cut down the grapes now ripened for judgment. From this huge winepress of the wrath of God flows the deep river of blood the length of Palestine. These are two symbols of what will occur at the place called Armageddon when the great Conqueror from the skies appears in His second advent. Preparations are now seen in Heaven for the outpourings of the seven bowls of God's wrath. The scarlet Dragon-controlled empire is the target of these ter-

rible judgments, falling in unprecedented fury upon the great centers of this awful tyrant enthroned by the dragon.

Bowl 1. The Beast worshipers become covered with painful sores. Heaven is pouring out its "blockbusters," and "bombing" the stronghold of the Dragon. It is now under attack.

Bowl 2. The sea becomes blood, not pure living blood, but putrid, corrupt, poisonous blood, dealing death to all with which it comes in contact. Thus it poisons every living soul in its waters.

Bowl 3. Now there is only blood to drink; only blood is available for all the common needs of life. Water has gone. Blood everywhere.

Bowl 4. The sun now rushes to afflict mankind. If the Gospel cannot soften the human heart, nothing can. The clay only becomes harder under suffering, and God is defied more than ever.

Bowl 5. The throne of the arrogant Beast is hit. The angels with unerring precision are finding their appointed targets. The kingdom of the Dragon usurper is doomed to destruction.

Bowl 6. The great Euphrates flows no more. Like the Red Sea and the Jordan it must give way before the oncoming legions of the Eastern kings.

Parenthetical portion number four now comes in between Bowls 6 and 7. As in the seals and the trumpet judgments, a pause is given between the last two, so here some details must now be explained, then the subject will be later resumed.

In the sickle judgments (14:14-20), the divine side of Armageddon is seen. Now the demon side is given. What strange powers will array the whole world to dare to fight against Almighty God! What mortal mind can ever conceive of such a mad idea?

The trinity of evil, formed by the crafty Dragon, are the archfiends that cause this great insurrection against high Heaven. The demons, these miracle-working fiends of the dark abyss, are the slimy froglike culprits that marshal the armies for Armageddon's slaughterhouse. They gather and commission the monarchs of the entire world to tear the Man Child from the skies. They hate with intense Dragon hate the Nazarene who will some day send them to their well-deserved doom (Mark 1:24). But the Advent is nigh at hand. The challenge so long delayed is now to be accepted. The skies are about to open for the Warrior Prince to appear. Heaven is waiting. Heaven is watching. Angels are girding on their swords of righteous wrath. The warning of the soon-coming Emancipator is heard. The slain of the Lord shall be many. The glorious Sun of Righteousness is soon to break through the dark clouds of earth (Mal. 4:2).

The seventh angel pours, and the temple in Heaven continues the storm of righteous wrath in punishing the world for its defiant, arrogant blasphemy and highhanded rebellion.

The terrible crash has at last come. Great cities are crumbling into eternal ruin, never to rise on earth again. The earth is rocking, tossed like a cork on the ocean of space. The hail is falling, smashing everything to atoms. The final end is fast approaching. The power of the fearful Dragon is tottering. Nature reels and staggers like a drunken man. Christ will soon appear.

Before the next parenthetical portion is given, the destruction of Babylon the Great is described. It is viewed from various standpoints. First, God destroys it through the kings who are allied with the Beast of the Roman Empire. This corrupt whore of the deepest dye, the unfaithful bride of Christ, now lies in utter desolation as these kings in jealous hate seal her doom. It is not the demons here that instigate the kings to destroy the woman, but a righteous God who

puts the burning desire into their hearts to carry out His will (chap. 17).

Then follows the reaction of Heaven as angels rejoice over her doom. Angels now announce the justness of her utter destruction; demons take full possession of her dismal habitations, as this proud palace of the fallen queen becomes a menagerie of unclean spirits and hateful birds. They tell of her guilt and shame and of the sad funeral dirges which three great companies of her admirers shall sing in lamentations as they mourn her loss. The kings, the merchants, and the mariners see the hope of their gain has gone. All are in tears and this world is changed into one vast scene of sorrow and tears. Though earth is sad, the heavens are glad. There the jubilant songs are heard. Babylon's music is hushed forever, but Heaven's is just beginning. Sin silences happy singing. Who could sing when the Scarlet Woman sat enthroned as mistress and queen of the earth?

The next *parenthetical portion, number five*, comes in at chapter 19:1-6. While the sad earth is mourning over the greatest commercial system the world has ever seen, High Heaven is bursting out in songs of rejoicing. The vast multitudes in that happy land are pouring out their "Alleluias"; happy hearts find expressions in paeans of worship and praise. Their prayers are at last answered as God avenges their blood by destroying Babylon who shed it.

As her smoke is mounting in great volume toward Heaven, the elders and the living creatures feel the passions for worship flooding their souls. They cannot remain passive in a scene like this. They fall prostrate before the august Ruler on His throne. He still sits upon His throne. He still reigns supreme. His eternal throne never trembles or totters. It is eternally immovable. The four "Alleluias" of the heavenly hosts seem to be the heralds proclaiming the marriage of the Lamb. Now this wicked and apostate

false bride of Christ has been destroyed. Now the true bride of the Lamb is being arrayed in her wedding garments to be publicly displayed in the magnificent advent of her Bridegroom and Lover. Descending in glory unsurpassed, in wealth never before witnessed, every heart overflowing in ecstasies of delight, the Church descends on the arm of her Beloved (Song of Sol. 8:5).

Some careful Bible scholars believe the *last parenthetical portion* is found from chapter 21:9-22 to chapter 22:1-5. A diligent study of these parenthetical portions will assist one greatly in understanding the framework and structure of the Book of Revelation.

CHAPTER 3

THE DAWN OF THE SCARLET AGE

THE PRIEST OF THE PATMOS ISLE

Just as the master hand of a great musician strikes the keys, and the attendant strains thrill the human soul, so the Holy Spirit in this wonderful portion of the inspired Canon of Holy Scripture strikes a keynote in every chapter, and that inspiring note resounds in all its celestial harmony. That keynote running throughout Revelation seems to be the word "scarlet." As we pass through the twenty-two chapters of this important Book, those whose ears are tuned by the divine Spirit will soon detect, above the many weird signs and symbols and other numerous presentations of truth, this word or theme of scarlet, and, if kept in mind, it will help the reader systematically to acquire and remember these important prophetic truths.

In the first chapter, our Lord appears as the Priest of the Patmos Isle. May we suggest at the start of our studies a careful notice of the person of Jesus Christ in this great and only entirely prophetic Book of the New Testament. He comes first as He always must come. Before you start to study any subject about the future with its Antichrists, empires, Armageddons, and other numerous fascinating subjects—see Christ first, hear Him first, read about Him first, and thus give Him the proper place, the place of pre-eminence. This is where you find Christ as you study Revelation, the crowning topstone to the temple of eternal truth. If you fail to see Him first, you will never make any progress

in the right understanding of the great actors in the final drama of the Scarlet Age. Oh, that the people of God would, above all things today, in private or in public, yield to our Lord Jesus Christ His place! Christ first must become the order of our lives, thus giving Him the place that God always gives to His Son.

The key to the Book is hanging on the door, ready for you to enter; it is found in the opening verse. It is the Revelation, the unveiling or the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ.

Be sure that you study the title of our Lord in this opening verse, as it gives a clue to the proper understanding of this Book. The wording of the titles of our Lord is most significant. Whichever of these two precious names comes first gives the key to its setting. Jesus is His human name, the humbled One of Calvary, obedient unto death. The purpose of this Book of Revelation is to reveal how this outcast One is to be the most highly honored on earth and the most worshiped in Heaven. Christ is His exalted name; it comes first so many times in the Epistles. It is Jesus first here. In the Gospels you have His ascent to His cross. In Revelation you have His ascent to His throne. This path to His glorious throne is the grand subject of this Book. Millennial blessings or eternal days cannot begin till He has been enthroned upon His own glorious throne. In the Gospel of John emphasis is placed on the deity of Jesus Christ; in the Revelation, John emphasizes the humanity of Jesus. In the first He is the Son of God; in the last He is the Son of man. The grand climax is reached when this rejected and despised Son of man, fulfilling the destinies of the eternal purposes of God, has at last been seated on the throne amid the acclamations of Heaven and earth.

John, the writer, is a martyr, banished by the cruel despot to the rock-bound Isle of Patmos in the Ægean Sea. Often had he remembered his Lord on the first day of each

week with the early Christian churches, but now he was deprived of this blessed fellowship. The Devil may deprive a child of God of this, his birthright privilege, but he cannot prevent him from being in the Spirit on this day. This was the blessed soul condition of John. Our Lord makes up to him more than could be enjoyed in the breaking of bread. The Lord Himself appears and gives to his lonely heart the sweet fellowship of His own self, His glory, His message, His smile, and His touch.

Jesus was concerned about His bondsman even though he was an outcast in this world. He was interested enough to leave Heaven, with all its attendant joys and unspeakable glories, and return to the scene of His crucifixion. Jesus was interested enough to bring to His Church seven great messages in spite of their sin and failure. He is always the same. He changes not. How can He forget us, poor failing creatures of earth's dust? We cost Him too much for Him to forget us. Through Paul, Christ addresses seven Gentile churches; now through John He is about to address another seven Gentile churches. These will be considered in our next chapter.

"I turned" (Rev. 1:12). How often is the blessing lost because we are found gazing in the wrong direction! Lot's wife turned to where she had left her heart, and through her turning she was turned into a pillar of salt. Had she been salt in the city of Sodom we might have read a different story in Genesis. Turning to Jesus always brings untold blessing. The poor backslider, Peter, turned and our Lord turned, and both eyes met, and that look broke the heart of God's erring child. Mary turned from the yawning sepulcher, from the darkness of the tomb to see Jesus. Angels she had beheld, but angels did not charm her heart. Angels, though great, are not enough to satisfy and heal a broken heart. As she turned, Jesus Himself met her tearful gaze and her

broken heart was healed and fully satisfied. Child of God, learn the lesson here: turn from the cause of your heart-breaking sorrows, your crushing heartaches, and gaze into the face of Jesus. The prodigal found no satisfaction in gazing at the swine troughs, the filth and mire; but when he turned and sought his father's face, then reconciliation and its blessings became his own.

Now what a glorious sight meets the lonely martyr's gaze! John, who had seen Him amidst the crosses, now sees Him amidst the seven golden lampstands. What a glorious sight it is to see Christ in His right place! God always places Jesus in the midst. If lost by Joseph and Mary, retracing their steps they find Him in the midst. On the Mount of Transfiguration He is in the midst. Even when cruel, heartless men impale Him on the gibbet of shame, there is only one place in which they are allowed to place Him—in the midst. In the appearances after His resurrection, He appears in the midst. In the glory of Heaven, always as before He is seen as the Lamb in the midst of the throne. If we Christians would restore our blessed Lord to His rightful place today, who could tell what great blessings would sweep over this world of ours?

CHAPTER 4

THE LORD JESUS AS JOHN SAW HIM ON PATMOS

THE SYMBOLISM OF HIS CLOTHING AND HIS APPEARANCE

The Lord Jesus appeared to the Apostle John on Patmos as Son of man. The humanity of Jesus our Lord is emphasized in Revelation, but the description of the glories that follow should settle forever any question as to His deity. He is clothed. On the cross He was stripped in His dying shame, every member of His holy body degraded. Now the scene is changed. The garment here corresponds to the ephod of Israel's priesthood. It was all of blue; blue is the heavenly color. Here is our heavenly High Priest robed in the insignia of His heavenly priesthood. The Epistle to the Hebrews unfolds this. Robes are the symbol of office. John beholds the Priest of all believers.

His breast is girded. There are three girdles of our Lord so rich to study. In John 13 He wears the girdle of service. In this He not only gave us an example, but typified His future work in Heaven for us as our great High Priest.

In Psalm 45 He wears the girdle of conquest. The glory bursts upon our startled souls as the future Messianic beauties and glories of our Lord's advent to Olivet are described. He is seen as girding Himself with the sword for righteous conquest.

Between His girding as the Bondslave and as the King of kings, He wears the golden priestly girdle on His heart for us in Heaven. Beneath this golden girdle beats a tender heart that feels for all His own.

His head and His hairs tell out so many precious truths: His Lordship of creation, the Kingdom, and the Church. How much confusion would vanish if His Lordship were owned today by His people! Two cases throw light on these descriptions. Absalom was famous because of his beautiful hair. Samson's hair was the secret of his strength. In our Lord both are combined: beauty and strength. The symbols also denote purity and eternity of being. It was thus that Daniel the prophet saw Him.

His eyes are all-searching, piercing, judging, consuming. In the Song of Solomon, Christ is spoken of as possessing the eyes of a dove. In a dove's eyes one sees the expression of gentleness, purity, softness, tenderness, no trace of guile or trickery. How these all tell out the graces found in our Lord! Here they are different; they are burning, penetrating. Have you ever been close enough to our Lord so that you could gaze into His very eyes? Get near enough to see right into them. Peter met those loving but searching eyes, and they melted his heart into bitter tears producing repentance.

His feet—now how changed! No longer bleeding as they tread the path to the tree; but now they tread in the royal pathway to His throne. Those blessed feet that never once trod in the path of sin, the feet once pinned in cruelty to a Roman gibbet, are now free to travel the royal road to His magnificent throne. As brass, when placed in the crucible and heated over the hot furnace flames, emits a purple color, so by this symbol is suggested the glorious destiny which lies before Him. He no longer has bloodstained feet, burning in speechless agony, wending His way to the place of the skull; but His feet burn in regal majesty on His way to the consummation of all God's purposes: Jesus seated and acclaimed by all creation as King of kings and Lord of lords. As brass was the only metal that could stand the fires of the

altar, so our Lord has withstood the altar fires of God's wrath against sin at Calvary, and He alone is worthy to accept the challenge, to accept the Kingdom and all its magnificent glories because of unswerving obedience unto death.

His voice. The majesty of His utterance, the resistless dignity of His words! That voice, once silenced in the hush of unspeakable agonies in the dark infamy of Golgotha, is now heard on earth again. It broke the silence of eternity when in the dawn of time He spoke worlds innumerable into existence. On earth it was mightier than the raging sea; it was heard above the tumult of angry billows calming the raging sea. The seas will become restless again as the Devil, the Dragon, stirs it up; but the same voice will again be heard, and its power will finally hush the raging billows into eternal calm.

His right hand. In the place of privilege the stars are held secure, complete and blessed. Eternal security is assured for all His saints. Surely the double lock cannot be broken. Placed in the right hand of Christ, then that hand enclosed in the hand of the omnipotent hand of God the Father, with its mighty grasp—who can and who dares attempt to break this double grip of the Almighty God and His Son? What a fruitful study there is in the hands of Jesus! His hands are the hands of deity, yet they are human hands. They are atoning hands, wounded, interceding, pleading, safe, glorified, and deathless.

His mouth. The Word of God proceeds from His mouth. His ministry is "It is written." Such was His defense in the Temptation. The written Word and the living Word cannot be separated. In the Garden, as His cruel foes approached Him, He had only to speak and His foes fell backward. At Armageddon, when they assemble to tear Him from the skies, He will need only to speak and miserable defeat shall be meted out to all His foes.

His countenance shines. Now there is no cloud; the shadows have gone; now it is not a face marred more than any man's. On earth in His meekness men could approach Him and spit in His face; they could come so near as to be near enough to bruise His face with their hard fists; but now all is changed, and He is unapproachable. Tenderness gives place to terribleness, meekness to irresistible majesty. This face of dazzling glory stopped Saul of Tarsus in his mad and murderous purpose. No human or angel eye can gaze into this face, shining in the effulgence of dazzling glory. Study the face of Jesus in the Word. Who can gaze upon that Sun in its dazzling strength? The stars fade out, all lose their glory when this glorious Sun has risen. If this glory is so great when Jesus is away from Heaven, what must His glory be when He fills that holy place? As the glorious Sun, He will yet appear to Israel and dispel all the gloom of her long night of sin and departure from God.

Suppose, child of God, that you could have such a glorious vision as John beheld. What would become of you? Like the seer, you would fall prostrate at His feet. What a blessed place to fall! The Bible is so full of falls. Most of them are sad and sinful falls. Adam fell, and it brought us all ruin. Cain fell from atonement by blood. Noah fell into drunkenness; Abraham, David, Solomon—and so the list grows; but this fall is the means of so much blessing. When our Lord reveals Himself, what else can happen? Like the patriarchs and great men of old, who gazed on our Lord in His pre-existent glory; or seraph, no matter whom—all must fall prostrate at His blessed feet and adore Him in worship, love, and praise.

John is overcome; he falls prostrate because the glory is too much for him; he faints away in human weakness, but he has a wonderful Lord. There is not a trial or weakness but that same Lord can use it to bring to us solace and bless-

ing. His hand is immediately upon the prostrate seer, imparting strength in his deathlike weakness. Oh, the touch of His wonderful hand! He touches the foul leper, and there is cleansing. (We have yet to see the first leper cleansed at these modern "divine healing" services; there would be a stampede if one of these rotting, living carcasses walked on the platform to be healed.) Christ touched the dead, and life was given; the grief-stricken are comforted as He pours in the balm of Gilead. His hands grip the sinking Peter, because they are the hands of power. His voice calls, "Fear not!" Study the "Fear nots"; they will meet your need and comfort your troubled heart. John had heard some of these "Fear nots" before: the "Fear not" for the martyr (Matt. 10:28); the "Fear not" on the storm-tossed sea; the "Fear not" of the upper room.

The hand that is laid on John is the hand of the self-existent One. The eternal I AM, the all-sufficient One, the unchangeable One, Deity, Godhood, possessor of all the attributes of the Godhead. He is the first; there is nothing before Him; He is before creation, before time, nothing precedes Him. He is before angels, and He is the source and originator of everything, its source and its first great cause. He is the last. Nothing will come after Him. When empires have vanished, when history has been climaxed, when, like a discarded garment, nature is all worn out and is no more, He remains as the unchangeable God. He is the living One, independent of all His creatures, the source of all life. In nature we take our life at birth from Him; in the new birth we take eternal life from His hands. The source and giver of life became dead, of His own will; He was not forced to die. His life was not snatched from Him. In that supreme moment, when conscious that the will of God had been completely carried out and the eternal purposes of God had all been completely carried out, He yielded up His Spirit

into the care and keeping of His Father God. His head did not fall in helplessness upon His crimsoned breast; He bowed His head in the full consciousness of His deity and in the full consciousness that the question of sin was eternally settled and redemption's work finished forever. His deathless hands hold the keys. Immortal, He stands serene in glorious majesty. Those keys have been forever wrested from the grasp of the Devil and are now in possession of the Conqueror of Calvary. Take heart, dear sorrowing child of God; there is not one grave or mausoleum, there is not a place that holds the sacred dust of your saved loved ones but what some day Jesus will unlock its dismal portals and release these prisoners to enter His eternal Glory. How busy these keys will be some bright morning unlocking all these prisons of hope!

The Priest of the Patmos Isle, who now appears in Heaven for us, will descend from Heaven, and His shout shall be heard as He appears for those who look for Him the second time. It will be our privilege to meet Him often as the holder of the keys unlocking the many doors of the future: the keys of the Kingdom, of life and death, of the place of departed spirits, of the gates to that holy city, of human hearts, of the Father's heart. He will open to us the great storehouses of the riches of grace, which He will lavish upon us as eternal years roll on.

CHAPTER 5

CHRIST'S SEVEN LAST MESSAGES TO HIS CHURCH

THE MEANING OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS

In our preceding chapter, we saw the seer lying prostrate at the feet of the One who stood in the midst of the lampstands (Rev. 1:13, 17), touched by His blessed hand. To understand the lampstands, it might be well to go back to Exodus 25 and consider the lampstand of the Tabernacle. There is untold profit in studying the types and shadows of the Old Testament. The lampstand was made of solid gold. Gold is the richest of earth's metals. Gold is the symbol of divine majesty. Its use in the lampstand speaks of the stupendous cost to God in the measureless sufferings of His Son at Calvary. It reminds us also that through that death we have been exalted through the riches of His grace, and that God sees us in His Son, accepted in the Beloved, justified, made as holy in our standing as our Lord Himself.

The gold of the lampstand was pure. It had passed through earth's refining processes, leaving no dross or impurity to mar its worth. It illustrates the terrible ordeal of Calvary's sufferings, when our Lord passed through the Refiner's crucible as our sins were laid upon Him and the scorching fires of God's wrath melted His holy soul as it was poured out in death. Sin could never stay on Christ. After the punishment due to us had been completely borne, the Lord Jesus is seen as the pure gold, glorious in His unsullied holy nature. The consuming fire fell on the Sacrifice,

the fires are quenched, the sins are forever gone, the gold now sparkles in its redemptive glory before God's throne.

The gold was beaten, hammered till the form of the seven-branched lampstand stood out in beauty and symmetry. Of all metals, gold can be hammered thinner than any other. It can be beaten thinner than paper. Beneath this imagery we can discern in the beating of the gold the terrible experiences our precious Lord must have undergone in the cruel beatings He received at the hands of brutal men. And greater than the mystery of man's bruising is the deeper mystery of the bruising by God, "yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him" (Isa. 53:10).

Unlike the Tabernacle, the great Temple built by Solomon had ten lampstands, these being made of pure gold. The lampstand was made by divine command. This speaks to our wondering hearts of the perfect obedience of our Lord Jesus as the dependent Man. Even unto death, no urge was ever found in His lowly soul to disobey His Father; He was completely submissive to the will of His God, not a step being taken or a moment spent, not a move being made but that was always calmly and quietly done in resignation to the will of the One who delighted in Him. Never shall we know or fully understand the meaning of Gethsemane, when alone in the gloom of its awful shadows that One, though He was God beyond all question, broke the stillness of that hideous night, crying out in the unspeakable agonies of His soul, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Here are seven lampstands. Each individual church is complete in itself, made to answer alone to Christ for its own responsibilities, sins, and failures; none could dictate to the other its course of action. The center was Christ, and from that center all decrees were given. There has only been one Church since Pentecost, and that Church is typified by the golden lampstand. The lampstands were seven, signifying

completeness in testimony or lightbearing. On each side of the central stem, which speaks of Christ, the six branches emerged, three on the right side and three on the left. They were part of the lampstand. Its symbolism is easily seen. We come forth from His wounded side. The picture is given in Genesis 2. Here is foreshadowed indissoluble unity between Christ and His Church. The bride was brought forth from the opened side of Adam. The typology is rich and beautiful (Eph. 5). She was brought forth not from his feet to be trodden on, but from the place nearest the seat of his affection, the heart, and near to his arm for her defense.

There were three branches on each side, equally divided but all vitally united to the stem. Here is what has happened at the cross. Jew and Gentile are brought into living union with Jesus Christ through His death, all equal in Christ, all joined to Him. He is their Center.

As with Adam and Eve, so with the stem and the branches: they were of the same material, part and parcel of each other, linked in indissoluble bonds one to another. The lamps were of the same piece, the same kind of metal, and all their functions were the same. There is only one Body known to the New Testament, not two bodies, for that would require two heads in Heaven. Since Pentecost, one Body has been united to the risen Head who is exalted in Heaven. This Body was formed on the Day of Pentecost, and through the cross is all united, and partition walls are all broken down. It is always the cross that the Epistles look back to; it was at the cross that the great work of reconciliation was done. We, like the golden branches, are sustained by the central Stem, and we are forever united; no bond can ever sever us from our Lord. So eternally united that no foe can separate us, we are His forever through His death, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh. His hopes are ours, His joys are ours, His prospects are our prospects, so closely

are we linked together in inseparable love (Rom. 8:35-39).

The lampstand was made for beauty. On its central stem were emblazoned and engraven the lovely figures of rare flowers and fruits. All these are symbols, and unfold to us beautiful lessons in themselves, bringing to the devoted heart the varied graces and beauties of our precious Lord Jesus Christ. The almond shows us Christ as the first fruits of the Resurrection. He is the golden Lily of the Valley. He is the golden Rose of Sharon. The lily speaks of our Lord in His spotless purity; the rose, of our Lord in the crimson glories of His redemptive work. The central stem reveals Christ as the altogether lovely One.

This lampstand was made for light. It was so constructed that its beams or rays of light fell directly upon the central stem, revealing its marvelous symmetry. This is what the Church in her highest calling was commissioned to do in a world plunged into midnight darkness by the extinguishing of the Light of the world on Calvary. She is to throw the light of her testimony on Christ, revealing His matchless beauty to a lost and dying world. She is called to "show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9, A.S.V.). Through our witness-bearing we reveal to the world the beauties we find in Him. How many today see no beauty in our lovely and precious Redeemer? The beauty is there, but sightless eyes cannot see it. The light of unregenerate reason, speculative philosophy, or worldly wisdom will not reveal it. It becomes our solemn responsibility to focus our light upon the central Stem, and as we walk in the light as He is in the light—not in nature's darkness—as priests unto our God, the beauties of Jesus our Lord will be revealed.

Linked forever with Christ, may we never lose sight of the precious lessons of the golden lampstand. We are linked with Him down here in suffering (1 Pet.); in fruitfulness

(John 13); in testimony (Rev. 1); in eternal union (Rom. 8); in eternal glory (John 17).

In no other portion of the Word of God do we find a greater insight into our Lord's heart and interests than in the messages to the seven churches of Asia. In each burning message He appeals to the individual church. Each is solemnly responsible before Him and hears its special message from His own lips. Each church, having different conditions, has the message most suited to its needs. Each church has a written message; each church is the special object of His watchful care and untiring interest.

In each He knows our *works*. His omniscient eye watches all that His people do for Him, for His people, for His servants, for the lost, the tempted, the tried, the sick, and the suffering. Even the cup of cold water cannot lose its reward; no tract given out ever escapes His eye; He sees every soul dealt with, all our labor of love. He knows and appreciates, and some day He will bestow on those who faithfully serve Him the rich reward of crowns, cities, kingdoms, and worlds.

He knows our *patience* (Rev. 2:2). This is a wonderful grace. The greatest men of Scripture were prone to lose their patience. Moses, the meekest man who ever lived, lost his patience before the rebels who heated up his holy soul in their clamor for water. Jonah lost his patience when he got out of sympathy with a patient God. Paul lost his patience with Israel's high priest. Only one Man never lost His patience, and that Man was Jesus our Lord. So our Lord commends His people when, like Him, they show patience—patience to the hypocrites in Ephesus, patience to the false apostles, the false Jews; patience in tribulation, in martyrdom. How our Lord shines out in His earthly life because of His infinite patience! May we seek to imitate the patient One. We shall need this heavenly, Christlike grace as days

grow darker and the path grows more difficult. May we in patience possess our souls, when home in Heaven it will be no longer needed. He offers a solution for all our special problems. He is just the same today. Whatever your problem may be, our Lord has an answer. He loves to have us bring the hard problems of our lives to Him. We cannot bear these crushing heartaches alone. His bosom will be our refuge. Nestle your tried and tempted soul upon it and, like those of old, tell Him all things (Mark 6:30).

He foresees all our *trials*. He knows every wind of adversity before it blows upon us. He foreknows Satan's plans. Before the tempter crossed Peter's path, the Lord Jesus knew all the evil designs and the snare. Christ would not allow the evil one to go too far. Our vision is veiled; we cannot see one step before us; God kindly blinds our eyes. But the Lord Jesus sees every path that we shall tread, and He can help us escape the snare of the fowler, He can be a haven in the storm, an anchor of the soul. Let us take heart—He foreknows. Our Lord acts quickly in judgment (Rev. 2:5). As a rule, God is slow to anger but quick to show mercy. His longsuffering is infinite. History is a written proof of this fact. The Old Testament proves it.

He knows our *failures*. What sad records of sin and miserable failures we have! Ephesus failed in her warm affection to Him who had loved her. On the cross our Lord yearned for comforters and human sympathy. He needs that no longer, for His sufferings are over; but on resurrection ground He longed for love. This is why He searched Peter's heart. The greatest tragedy that can befall any Christian is to leave his first love for his Saviour. It is the greatest tragedy for a church. Any fall is possible after this fall has been realized. The great problem that confronts the Church of God today is the problem of divorce. Its hidden cause is revealed here. Someone has crossed our path and weaned away our heart

from our first lover. The old, sly world would wean our heart from the Lord Jesus, our Lover. Let us search our hearts and renew our covenant, in the solitude of our rooms on our knees; and, in the presence of our Lover, tell Him again and again, "Lord Jesus, I love Thee."

He knows our *poverty*. He shared life's penuries with us when as one of the poor He dwelt on earth. He knew poverty far deeper than we shall ever know it. He had no bed, no pillow, no money. How many things He must borrow! In this He understands us. Poverty these churches may experience, privation may become their lot; the dark, underground catacombs may be entered, and the deep poverty of martyrdom be felt; yet the Lord Jesus knows all about it. He will share the bitterness with His people; and, though poor, through His grace they shall make many rich.

He knows all about our *zeal*. He knows and appreciates when the heart beats true to Him. He knows when in our burning zeal we detest the hypocrite, the shallow professor, the one who seeks to cover a sinful heart with a cloak of religion, some cloak of a false piety. Our Lord knows when our soul flames in righteous indignation against the blasphemy of that holy name by which we are called, when the spurious advocates use that name in downright deception. Our zeal is like fire, a useful thing when under control and used for man's good, but a terrible scourge when allowed to spread its devastating flames unchecked, as in the case of forest fires.

He knows how to reward the overcomer. How brightly His wisdom shines forth here! He knows how to stir our hearts, the incentive that will fan the feeble spark into a flame of devotion to His precious name. How rich and profitable it is to study these great rewards! To Ephesus is offered the partaking of the tree of life (Rev. 2:7). Adam in his earthly paradise could never partake of the tree of life.

Here in the heavenly paradise the overcomer enjoys the blessing lost by Adam, the fallen and outcast. To Smyrna, about to suffer unspeakable atrocities, He declares that the overcomer shall not be hurt of the second death. Enemies may destroy the body but they cannot kill the soul. To Pergamos He offers the hidden manna, the white stone, and the new name. To Thyatira, which had a lust for worldly power and influence, the bright reward was offered of rule, power, victory, and the morning star. To Sardis was promised the glittering robe of whiteness, a perpetual place in the book of life, and confession before His Father and the angels. Philadelphia has offered to it the place as pillars in God's house and the writing of a new name. Laodicea is offered association with the enthroned Overcomer as He sits enthroned in His Father's throne.

CHAPTER 6

THE MESSAGES TO EPHEBUS, SMYRNA, AND PERGAMOS

AND SERIOUS WARNINGS FOR PRESENT-DAY CHURCHES

We must never forget that, after we have studied the seven churches in the standing they had before God as they then existed, there is another view which is given for our understanding and profit. For the present we leave the *actual churches* and begin to examine them as *representative churches*. The study begins to be striking as we view them as conditions of Christendom since the day of Pentecost until our Lord appears again; each church represents the development of some failure and sin. These developments will increase until the Scarlet Woman fills the prophetic scene and later is destroyed by the ten kings. In these seven representative churches the true Church lives and moves and has its being. If we do not keep this clear in our minds, then difficulties insurmountable will cross our path.

Let us repeat again that, when we study the seven churches of Asia as representative churches, they picture Christendom from the Day of Pentecost until our Lord comes, and in these churches exists the true Church which is His Body. A little Bible geography will help us here. A glance at the map will reveal that the seven churches form an almost complete circle. Actually these churches existed when John was prisoner on the Isle of Patmos. There were many churches scattered around the parts where the Word

had been preached, but only these were chosen because, no doubt, of the peculiar conditions existing in them. These peculiar conditions exactly portrayed the sad and lamentable conditions into which professing Christianity would finally emerge. Prophetically they give us a bird's-eye view of what was to happen to the professing Church from its first days of love and power to the end of this dispensation, when the sad Laodicean state would at last be reached.

These messages should be prayerfully studied by every church member to see if he is guilty of the sins that are mentioned. If the people of God would take to heart, today, in soul exercise, these burning messages, we might witness God's hand moving again among His people and saving multitudes of dying men who are slipping into hell-fire. They bring to us a challenge that must be met, and in them lies the secret of why the Church is so impotent when at our disposal we have all the resources of Heaven itself. Why is the Church so powerless today? Here is our answer. These messages were all to be written, and when God writes He has the thought of permanence. They were not written only to these existing churches; God intended that His people down through the ages should read them, be warned by them, and thus be led into a closer and more intimate walk and fellowship with the Priest of the Patmos Isle, whose wistful heart yearns for our love and affection at the present time as it did toward His Church at Ephesus.

These seven messages all contain the word "saith," showing that they were not only written messages, but that they first fell from the burning lips of the holder of the seven stars. This reveals the urgency of their import, the timeliness of what burdened the heart of our Lord and what He felt was so urgently needed.

The Church at Ephesus reveals the virgin state of His Church. How rich in good works it was, how great in its

knowledge of the highest truths; so full of loyalty that it could not stand any misrepresentation of false apostles! How remarkable was its marvelous patience and all it had borne for His name's sake, staggering, but not fainting under the burdens of untiring labors for Him! Yet in those piercing eyes of the Son of God there was a look of sadness as He reproved them for losing that which was dearest to His heart—their first love.

How mean our hearts are to deny Him the love we owe to the One who gave Himself for us! May memory, aided by the Spirit of God, help us here; and, as our souls muse upon the sufferings of His dying love, let us repent and save ourselves from the sad experience of this early church at Ephesus. This star of the first century of the Christian Church, with its waning, borrowed light, was shown how to restore its lost power and prevent its removal from the exalted place in the golden lampstands. But she failed to repent and respond to the loving call, and her lampstand was removed; she shines no more in this dark world of sin, her days of testimony and light-bearing have passed away. May you and I heed the voice of the Priest of the Patmos Isle and, by repentance and a renewal of our first love, continue shining brightly for our Lord Jesus until traveling days are done.

The Church of Smyrna would represent the days that followed Ephesus, from A.D. 100 to 311, or from the death of John to the reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine. Smyrna suggests the fragrance of the myrrh as it was crushed, as were the members of this early Church by cruel martyrdom. This was the suffering Church, the Church which typified the people of God who bore the brunt of the satanic hate of its persecutors. Smyrna means myrrh, and just as myrrh gives out its greatest fragrance when it is bruised, so these sufferings brought out the sweet and lovely fragrance

as those lives were crushed by the ruthless hand of their persecutors. The power behind these terrible outbursts of relentless persecution was the Devil; his plan was the utter extermination of God's people. The ten Roman emperors were only his agents. It was through their fiendish atrocities that Satan was able to give vent to his hateful malignity against these thousands of helpless but bold men and women, these souls who constituted the noble army of martyrs. These objects of the Devil's hate, of whom the world was not worthy, went into the presence of their Lord by means of crucifixion, the stake, and other forms of torture too terrible to describe. They sleep in their resting places unknown to man, awaiting the sounding of the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and they will answer in resurrection glory. These noble armies of martyrs will be seen marching down the fields of glory to enter into the joy of their Lord, by whom they overcame; and now as overcomers they shall not be hurt by the second death.

This church is an inspiring example, and it gives to those who may be called upon to follow in their train the comfort and assurance of knowing that God *gives dying grace for dying hours*. In these difficult days, when in many lands the people of God still pass through suffering for righteousness' sake and even martyrdom, let them remember Smyrna and take courage. Our faithfulness is not forgotten by our Lord; if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him. Our works and our patience are not to be unnoticed; we shall still hear His voice, "Fear not." He foresees the tragedy long before our eyes can detect its coming, just as He foreknew the future sufferings and sorrows of His early church, so He foreknows our future lot.

As many of our brethren in lands such as Russia, Spain, Germany, and many other parts of the world, where the fires of persecution still burn so brightly, suffer as martyrs for

Christ, may we in free America not be found wanting, if our liberties go with the winds some day and we are called to seal our testimony with our blood. He will be with us. He will never leave us nor forsake us. In the fire, like those of Daniel's day, we shall feel His nearness; in the waters—He hath promised that they shall not overflow, but they shall bear us on their bosom into the glory of His presence. Let us be true to death for Him.

The Church at Pergamos represents the professing church of about A.D. 311 to 590, or from the Emperor Constantine to Pope Gregory the First. It gives us the marriage of the Church with the world. Satan, when he failed to exterminate by martyrdom the people of God, now changed his tactics. Now, instead of his ugly frown, he gave his smile of favor and prosperity to these dear saints who because of bitter persecution had suffered the loss of all things. As of old, what Moab could not do by cursing and open hostility, Balak succeeded in doing by instigating the marriage of the charming daughters of Moab to Israel's sons. What the Devil could not do by the bloodthirsty Neros of pagan Rome, he now succeeds in doing through the generosity of Constantine the Great. So the wily serpent soon caught the unsuspecting Church as he caught Eve unawares, and her arm lost its hold of her Beloved and soon linked arms with her greatest foe. Instead of abiding in the shadow of her refuge—God's throne, the Church was now found under the shadow of Satan's throne, sharing its protection from the persecutors' wrath and enjoying the blessings of its false magnanimity.

Here begins the sad decline of that institution which God ordained should walk alone with Him. The wanton harlot, described in Proverbs 7, had caught its unwary victim while the God-Man was absent from the scene. History is full of the centuries of sin and loss of testimony which can

be laid at the door of the Church. Stripped of its mighty power, it has never recovered from its dreadful fall; and as the sad eyes of the holder of the sharp sword behold His people tangled in the web of this unholy alliance, He can only command repentance (Rev. 2:16).

When shall we as the people of God learn the ways of God in separation so clearly taught in His precious Word? How can we fellowship with that which the Lord hates? There is always blessing in the path of obedience. Shall we not renew our loyalty to our adorable Lord and lover of our souls by a closer walk in fellowship with Him, thus escaping the fowler's snare? As this age draws nearer to its fateful close, and the foul waters of the incoming tide of iniquity creep higher and higher, the Church of God will find her safe retreat in separation from this godless age and in nestling closer on the bosom of our Redeemer and Friend, walking as Enoch walked, habitually each day with God until, like Enoch, we pass from earth to Heaven, not through the terrors of death but through the glorious rapture of His coming. The star of Pergamos, the lampstand, has fallen and gone; no longer does her light shine in the dark world's night, the light of this church which shone so brightly for her God in the royal city of Pergamos, this city so renowned for its learning, science, and medicine, its great libraries, and great products. In this center of heathen serpent worship, all is left in its pagan darkness. The divinely appointed star and lampstand, through sin and a false toleration of the world, must be removed; it must be cut down in judgment by Him who holds the sword.

Let God's people heed this solemn warning. These are days when we hear on every hand pleas for toleration and union. Yes, toleration is good if it be where Scripture enjoins it to be. But of a world at enmity with God, and which murdered the Son of God, there can be no toleration. We

must learn to love the things that God loves and to hate the things that God hates, no matter what it may cost us; lest like Pergamos we form a union with the enemies of our God and His Christ, our testimony fail, our light be quenched, and we be sold out to the Devil.

The greatest rebuke and cure for Modernism today is not in linking ourselves with it, but in separating from it and practicing the truths for which we stand. Many men who stand high in the estimation of Fundamentalists would have far greater power for God today if they practiced the truth lost by Pergamos: to compromise truth is to embrace falsehood. Doctrine is despised today, and, sad to say, very few have any appetite for it; it upsets the Devil's program and puts a bad taste in the mouth of the carnal Christian; but it was doctrine that gave the acid test to Pergamos. God needs men today with moral fiber, who not only know doctrine but practice it. Churches today are after the prestige of the world and are willing to sacrifice the fellowship of a rejected Lord for the fellowship of the wanton bride of Satan who will come to full blossom after the Rapture (Rev. 17).

Our Lord in His wisdom commends the good; then with His sharp sword He cuts deeply into the heart of this guilty church that repentance might be the fruit. Then in wonderful patience He offers the wealth of His rewards to win back her heart, to loosen the cords that bind her to an ensnaring world, and to focus her gaze on the brow which this same world could wreath with a crown of thorns.

CHAPTER 7

THE MESSAGES TO THYATIRA AND SARDIS

THEIR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND THEIR LESSONS FOR TODAY

The Church of Thyatira represents the degeneration of Pergamos into Romish corruption. It covers the Dark Ages of A.D. 500 to 1500. It unfolds the development of the papal system, which followed the union of the Church and the world. It is the longest message given to the churches. It begins the second group in the division of these churches. The first three go together, the last four go together. It is the only church in which a woman's name is mentioned—Jezebel, the queen of Israel, the consort of Ahab, the power behind his throne, probably the most sinful woman to stain the page of history. She was religious—yes, but with a heart as black as hell. She was cunning, crafty, idolatrous, clever, pagan, bloodthirsty, the pagan murderess of Jezreel, the woman that turned the boldest prophet of God into a trembling, craven coward. Here she represents another woman who with her seductive charms is seducing the Church at Thyatira. Her baneful influence has molded the system that she represents. She is a counterfeit prophetess who seeks to impress her hearers with her authority and dogmas; a teacher who shackles the Word of God with her own false interpretations, as Rome insists on her interpretations of the Bible; a seducer who seduces the soul from Christ to His mother Mary; seduces from the finished work of Christ to

an endless mass of worthless charms, beads, prayers, rosaries, penances, fasts; seduces by her confessional, the filthy cess-pool of iniquity that drags its victims through the mire of moral filth and shame, where the wife and mother must tell the licentious priest the happenings of her wedded life and bare her inmost soul to the filthy priest of Rome. Let the reader read for himself from her own historians and vaunted clerics, and from the works of Charles Chiniquy of this immoral system that has sent millions to hell and ruined the morals of millions more. This great seducer is still at work enslaving millions of its victims. Oh, that God would raise up another Luther, another Calvin, another Knox to stem the onward march of this wicked Church of Rome!

Thyatira is the well-known symbol of a system born of Jezebel (Rev. 2:20, 23). This system lives on today, and is growing by leaps and bounds and will eventually become the nucleus of mystical Babylon (Rev. 17). Corruption of doctrine always leads to corruption of morals. If our doctrines are decaying, we may expect that our moral standards will soon become the same. It was so in Thyatira; it is the same today. For over fourteen centuries the Son of God has patiently borne with this sinful system that is composed of a mixture of paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, but it knows no repentance and still remains unchanged today. Rome never changes. Our Lord could have blotted her out, but He gave her followers space to repent.

Our Lord's long-suffering will continue until that moment arrives when in the role of the Scarlet Woman, sitting enthroned as mistress and queen of this apostate world and leading as her consort the Beast of the Roman Empire, the last and greatest monarch of Christendom, she falls to rise no more, and this great system, conceived by Jezebel in Thyatira, and which, through the centuries known as the Dark Ages, made the most powerful monarchs tremble,

passes on to her well-merited doom. When the child of Thyatira becomes the "mother of harlots," and these harlots give birth to the cults and isms of guilty Christendom, and all are placed in the Devil's melting pot, the Scarlet Woman appears.

Had this church judged this sin and put away this foul hateful woman from its midst, how different things might have been today! The laxity of the church today is appalling in this very thing and terrible sins are sanctioned by the church. A principle given by divine authority in the Holy Scriptures is that, when sin is committed among the people of God, the saints are duty bound fearlessly and righteously to judge that sin by the Scriptures. Failure to do so was the sin of Thyatira, and it later bore its bitter fruit. Rome may fool the Modernists, but she cannot fool God. Rome never alters her creeds to suit anybody; her eye is upon earthly power, the power she wielded before the Reformation. If she had that power today, Christian blood would flow in rivers again, the fires of martyrdom would be rekindled, and all her infernal implements of torture would be working overtime. The "overcomers," who turn away from her allurements (vs. 26-29), will receive the overcomer's reward of association with Christ when He rules the earth in person.

In the Church at Sardis is pictured that great movement known in history as the Reformation, the movement which shook the medieval thoughts of religion. The tiny hammer that nailed Luther's theses on the church door of Wittenberg was a challenge to the greatest religious system of Christendom. Not only in Germany but all over the world men of God were rising. John Knox in Scotland, John Calvin in France, and others were being moved by God to champion the cause of Protestantism. Soon the Dark Ages would be dispelled by Gospel light. These bold reformers fanned to flames the dying embers of forgotten truths. This fast be-

came a period of recovery. The time of this recovery would be between A.D. 1517 and 1750.

Some of the great truths that were recovered were:

1. *The authority of the Bible* over the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. The great debates surged around this rock. The Bible had been a closed book, and only the priests had access to it. Now it began to be an open book. The heavenly light streamed again from its pages dispelling the gross darkness of Romish superstition. Rome today is still the enemy of the Bible, wherever she can do so, she seeks to keep men from it. This fact has been proved by many eyewitnesses in many lands. Rome chained the Bible, and burned the Bible and those who dared to print it or read its pages. Its followers became martyrs of men like Claverhouse, Bonner, and other zealots of papal Rome. Read your histories, read of the Spanish Inquisition, St. Bartholomew's Massacre, and countless other records of the infamy of Romish persecution, proved to have been committed by her beyond all reasonable doubt.

2. *Justification by Faith Alone*. This doctrine had been lost in the rubbish of papal superstition. This imprisoned truth rose again from its tomb and set the soul free. Its grave-clothes removed, it set forth on a new ministry to bless the hearts of men. It was this truth coming with all its quickening power that saved Martin Luther as he foolishly climbed the stairs of Rome. The fetters of superstition that enslaved the victims of the Roman See fell off, as with opened eyes men saw that forgiveness of sins could not be bought, indulgences were only a sinful farce, and that only Jesus Christ, through His glorious death on Calvary, had the power and right to forgive sins and He Himself was the only mediator between God and man.

3. *Liberty of Conscience*. Conscience, hitherto kept a prisoner, was released and allowed to function as God had

intended it should do. Rome denied the use of the conscience, and her priests usurped the right to tell men what they should do. This great light of the human soul with which the great Creator endowed His creatures will always take the part of God.

4. *Freedom of Speech.* The priest was the mouthpiece of Rome; his word, as it was ordered through her popes, was final and binding. To challenge her teachings or question her decrees was to have the anathemas of the pope upon you and to be excommunicated and damned forever. The Reformation set men free as moral agents, responsible to God alone.

5. *Confession of Sin to God Alone.* The auricular confessional has been the cesspool of iniquity since its invention. Civil authorities, to protect its victims, had to legislate against this wicked practice to safeguard women who, through delusion, came to pour out all their sins to the wily priest who pried their hearts with indecent questionings. Would to God that the American people would inform themselves as to how this licentious practice is ruining the body and soul of the millions of its victims. There is no mediator between God and man but Jesus Christ. Mary cannot intercede, Peter never could, saints are helpless here, priests can never come between God and man. Only Jesus Christ can do this.

6. *The Lord's Supper.* The blessed institution of this memorial feast, in spite of all its simplicity, was changed by Rome to the idolatrous Mass. This unbloody sacrifice was adopted from paganism about the fourth century. It has made Rome rich. In it the bread is supposed to be changed into the actual body of Christ and the wine into the blood of Christ.

7. *The Scriptural Doctrine of Eternal Punishment.* Even today Rome teaches that souls must go to purgatory and that, through its refining fires and by the continual payment of

money, they can finally be delivered. This is one of the greatest money-making schemes the world has ever known. Money ceaselessly flows into the treasure chests through prayers for the living and prayers for the dead. Rome claims that those who die outside her Church are eternally lost. The loved ones of those who die inside her Church must pay to get their souls out of purgatory or else they burn in these purgatorial fires. Thus by this heartless, cruel, inhuman method of preying upon human sorrows and broken hearts these cruel, heartless priests extract untold sums of money from helpless victims who are taught from infancy the farce of purgatory. Purgatory comes from pagan superstition and not from the Word of God. The Reformation restored the Biblical doctrine that, at death, the eternal destiny of a soul is fixed. Once a soul enters the place of departed spirits where the souls of the impenitent dead are sent (Luke 16:19-31), no amount of money can buy release.

These are but a few of the many blessings that the Reformation restored. How sad it is to witness the trend of the times—Protestantism losing its mighty power, turning again to Romish superstition. Like Sardis, official Protestantism is dead. She has a name to live but is lifeless. Profession without possession. What a blessing a living Protestantism could be to this sad world today! We need another Martin Luther to challenge once more the claims of papal Rome, another John Knox that could make her tyrants weep, another William Tyndale, with that burning passion that the poorest as well as the richest shall read the Word of God. We need someone to embalm and bury this dead Modernist Protestantism, bury it with all its Babylonian superstition acquired from this "mother of harlots," and we need a new Protestantism to be born, which will again champion the great truths lost in late years—the absolute

authority of the Holy Scriptures; the eternal efficacy of the shed blood atonement of Christ; the deity of Jesus Christ; the priesthood of all believers; and the other grand, old truths which fit us for Heaven and which keep us out of hell.

CHAPTER 8

THE MESSAGES TO PHILADELPHIA AND LAODICEA

SOLEMN WARNINGS AND GREAT REWARDS THAT SHOULD STIR OUR SOULS

In the Church at Philadelphia we see the restoration of a permanent value taking place. We can almost feel the throb of our Lord's heart satisfaction as He so highly commends this church for all its attainments and spiritual power. This church represents the period of awakening and recovery that followed the Reformation, from A.D. 1850 to the Lord's second coming. God moved on the hearts of this remnant, and many truths, lost since the days of the early church, were recovered. Here we see the Lord opening doors, and the Philadelphia church entering them—doors of recovered truth, doors of missionary enterprise. For centuries these doors seemed fast closed, but now by His grace our Lord opens the portals. Some of these truths are mentioned, and briefly they are as follows:

1. *The premillennial return of our Lord*—that the Lord Jesus will return before the millennium and not after it. A large number of professing Christians refuse to accept this view and are known as postmillennialists. They believe the world is improving and, when it has reached its final state of perfection, Christ will appear. No such doctrine is found in the Holy Scriptures. On the contrary, if the reader will read the New Testament, he will soon discover that the world is to grow darker, more sinful, and more apostate until it is

like sinful Sodom or the days of Noah. Then comes the sudden appearing of our Lord, first in the air *for* His Church, then later to the earth *with* His Church.

2. *The truth concerning the Holy Spirit*—His personality, work, deity, gifts, inspiration, power, and attributes.

3. *The Church as the mystical body of Christ.*

4. *The headship and lordship of Christ.* The inclusion in that body of all born-again believers, entering into this body only by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

5. *The simplicity of the Lord's Supper.* Invited as guests of our ascended Lord to this blessed feast, so simple yet so majestic, we come to remember our beloved Lord. His precious blood, shed and poured out in atonement for us, is represented by the cup. His body, represented by the bread, speaks to each adoring heart of His holy humanity broken for us—broken by thorn, by nail, by scourge, and by spear. That body is now glorified and exalted to the right hand of God His Father.

In the Philadelphia period our Lord opens the door of missionary enterprise. Thank God for the great men and women whom He raised up and who have entered these doors—men like David Livingstone, Hudson Taylor, Carey, and so many others. Not only in missionary enterprise, but God was pleased to sweep some lands with great revivals. Using such men as the Wesleys, Finney, Moody, and others, showers of refreshing fell from Heaven upon a parched world. But in spite of all the great attainments of this church, there is sign of failure, the failure of weakness. Instead of this church's rising in the power of the Holy Spirit, there is limited power; instead of fullness of power, only a little strength when there should have been great strength.

Here our Lord manifests the long-suffering that so often shines forth from His tender heart. How long-suffering He

is with this church in her weakness! This long-suffering is still manifested today, as our Lord sees His Church in ruins, scattered, divided by party names, powerless and shorn of the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. And yet this weakness among the people of God invites the exercise of His patience. It is this long-suffering that moves Him to rapture His Church before the horrors of the Great Tribulation. The time of this darkest hour of the world's history will not be realized until the Church is safe home in the Glory. We shall not witness the appalling sights when the judgments of an outraged Heaven are poured out upon an abandoned world.

Philadelphia, representing the true Church, will all be raptured, not one will be left behind. A partial rapture would be inconsistent with the grace of the Lord Jesus, and it would break His solemn promises. A partial rapture is a delusion of the Devil, and is contrary to God's Word. No, that same patient One will keep us *from* that hour, not *in* that hour, for *in* that hour we shall need no keeping for we shall be gazing on Christ in Heaven. When the river of time is divided, it will bear on its bosom the Church to Heaven, and on the other it will bear the apostate of Israel, the apostate religious world, and the apostate political world to the unparalleled sorrows of the Great Tribulation and then to their final doom, the lake of fire.

The Church of Laodicea represents the last and final condition of Christendom previous to the Rapture. It is the church of indifference, worldly conformity, self-satisfaction. It is modern and progressive, but it has no room for Jesus Christ. It sits in judgment over God's Word. It is popular with the people. Here our Lord, in patience unsurpassed, stands outside the fast-closed door and pleads for an entrance. No one can doubt that we have already entered this final stage of this dispensation. Indifference is the spirit of our

age—no ice, but no heat, self-satisfied, but not Christ-satisfied, conscious of its riches, but not conscious of the Enricher. This dispensation is soon to close. When we see these Laodicean conditions before our eyes, we may rest assured that its sands have nearly run out in the hourglass of time. The sun of this day is fast setting over the hills of time, the darkness will soon creep over this world. That sun is not to set in golden glory, but rather in the darkness of shame and apostasy with the Lord Jesus outside. There are no bright pictures here where thousands are swept into the Kingdom of God, no story of a coming together in the unity of the Spirit, no great, startling missionary enterprises to lands deprived of Gospel light, but the somber picture of a church unrepentant, proud, arrogant, defiant, so satisfied that it does not want Jesus Christ. It has slammed the door in His face. This is Christendom at the close of the age of grace.

Our Lord appears in the role of the divine Merchant; in wonderful counsel He offers true riches. His hands are loaded with the wealth of Heaven. He is the source of riches. He is ready to anoint sightless eyes. He has the choicest robes to clothe this naked church. Will His patience be exhausted? Will He depart before that door is opened? Will grace and pity, despitefully used, leave her to her doom? The answer will be given some day. If the church will not do it, we as individuals can answer. Open, for our Beloved is waiting at the door! His locks are wet with the dews of night (Song of Sol. 5:2). The Lord will come for His people, but Laodicea will be spewed out and left for her part in the coming drama of the Scarlet Age. To keep Christ outside of the heart makes it necessary for Christ to keep you out of Heaven. To love riches now more than Christ Jesus, to love the blessings more than the Blessor, is to lose Heaven at last. To crush, willfully, the

deepest longings of Jesus, to hear Him knock with nail-pierced hand and willfully to keep Him outside is to invite the judgment of God upon your soul. This was the sin of Laodicea; this is the sin of this apostate age.

There are some things worthy of special notice in the seven messages to the churches:

There is something lost in every church.

Ephesus lost her first love. It is a tragedy for any individual or any church to have the heart grow cold toward Christ. It leaves the door open for any of the falls that follow in the other churches.

In Smyrna is seen a lost life. The noble army of martyrs must seal their testimony with their blood.

Pergamos records a lost position. Like Lot they had left their place of separation from the world.

Thyatira lost her moral purity; sin was on the throne. Jezebel ran the things of God; purity had gone.

Sardis had lost her power; like poor Samson, shorn of her great strength, she was powerless.

Philadelphia was warned lest she lose her crown. We shall need it some day to cast at His pierced feet.

Laodicea lost her proper attitude to Christ. The heavenly Merchant vainly stood outside her door.

Though there is failure in every church, our Lord has a remedy for the ruin, sin, and failure.

In Ephesus and Pergamos, that remedy is repentance. Repentance has almost entirely gone out of our ministry today, both to saint and sinner. May God bring us back to a new emphasis on this essential experience, preceding restoration for the Christian and reconciliation for the sinner!

Smyrna is exhorted to be faithful even to the horrible death by fire or the lions.

Thyatira was called upon to judge her sins, to put away this wicked Jezebel and purge herself from iniquity.

Sardis finds a remedy in watchfulness. Christ is to come at an hour unknown, coming as a thief in the night.

Philadelphia must tenaciously hold, as a steward, the things God hath given to her, to tighten her grip on the sacred truths given by divine revelation.

Laodicea will find relief in buying from the divine Merchant that which she so sorely needs. Christ alone has those vast resources. He alone can satisfy.

In every letter our Lord assumes a different character.

In Ephesus, He is the Beloved, who mourns the loss of His beloved's first love.

In Smyrna, as the Comforter, He seeks to cheer the martyr before he met his cruel murderers.

In Pergamos, He is the Contender against compromise and a false toleration of evil doctrine.

In Thyatira, He is the Judge of moral impurity, of a wicked counterfeit, and her pretentious claims.

In Sardis, He is the Reprover, because her works were found not perfect before God.

In Philadelphia, He is the Guardian, who will safeguard His true Church from the Great Tribulation.

In Laodicea, He is the Merchant offering for sale His indispensable wares.

May God help us as His people to heed the solemn warnings passed on to us today through the scarlet churches of Asia, thus avoiding, as His people, the ruin and tragedies which befell them. Then may God cheer and encourage our hearts by these incentives, these great rewards that He has offered to those who overcome, and may our souls be stirred to their deepest depths in their love for Him, who loved us even unto death.

CHAPTER 9

THE DOOR OPENED IN HEAVEN

WHEN IT WILL OPEN, WHO WILL PASS THROUGH IT, AND WHAT LIES BEHIND IT

In chapter 4 of Revelation, a door is opened in Heaven. That door is closed now, but some golden daybreak it is going to swing wide open to let the Church pass through to the many mansions of the Gloryland. For those believers who are alive on the earth when that day comes, it is going to be the quickest, although the longest, journey that they have ever taken. In fact, they will not have time to pay much attention while on the way. "In a moment," oh, how fast these elevators will travel, bearing the saints upward to the realms of endless glory! Behind that door now our loved ones who have gone before us are patiently waiting for us to come.

When will that door open? Not until the history of Christendom has finished its appointed course, and the seven churches of Asia have all come to the end of their sinful history. "After this" (Rev. 4:1). After what? After the sinful failure and the sin of professing Christendom, typified by these seven churches, has come to an end. "After this"—then the Rapture.

The Lord removes the true Church from this mass of false professors, and takes us within the door. No details are given here of this blessed hope of the Church, but the understanding heart, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, can discern

what lies on the sacred page. The history of the true Church has now been finished on earth, and she is seen here in her translation from earth into Heaven by the removal of the seer by the Spirit through the door opened in Heaven.

Heaven must be entered if we would gain a true perspective of the future. Too often we stay on earth and, becoming morbid, we do not read the future aright. What wonderful things await us once we enter that heavenly door! Behind that door stands God's eternal throne, established and settled. That throne never trembles or totters. Men forget that that throne exists. Because that throne is silent, they forget its grim and dreadful reality. Some day, when God has removed His Church to Heaven, men will become conscious that it still stands in terrible holiness.

Now we come to the third section, and the final part of Revelation—"the things which must be hereafter." We leave this world, and from the mountain peaks of Glory we view the tremendous tragedies that are to befall the realm of Christendom and finally the whole world. From now on, the panorama of colossal events that are soon to take place in this world pass like some hideous dream before our vision. The true Church will not pass through these awful judgments. We shall have left this scene long before any of them come to pass. The Church will not pass through the Tribulation; she will be safe with her Lord above the storm. The Church is never mentioned after chapter 3 until, as the bride of the Lamb, she is seen in Heaven making herself ready to return with her Lord to earth in His second advent. The word "church," or "churches," appears twenty times in the first three chapters, and then fades away, to be mentioned as such only once again in chapter 22:16.

We pass into a new condition of things after chapter 3. These divisions do not overlap. There are new companies mentioned who will be acting in the theater of these judg-

ments taking place on earth, Jews and Gentiles, saved and unsaved, but it is very plain they are not the Church, because she has left the scene. The Lord is no longer seen walking among the lampstands on earth, but He is on the throne in Heaven. The Church and the redeemed of past ages are seen in Heaven as elders. They are seen at different times in these great worship meetings before the throne in Heaven. Later they accompany our Lord out of Heaven; they must go in before they can come out. How did they get in? Through the opened door.

This happy day is fast approaching—the day when Jesus rises from His Father's throne and with His pierced hand opens this beautiful door. Coming through that pearly gate, He will call and we shall answer. What will those words be? "Come." That first voice will, like a trumpet, call us all home to Glory. That trumpet voice will wake our dead, burst asunder every fetter of death and corruption, speak our welcome home, and transform our mortal bodies like unto His glorious body. Every individual saint, whether living or dead, will hear this personal call.

It will be the *voice of communion*. John tells how this voice was talking with him, not scolding, not rebuking, not condemning, but inviting him to enter His Father's House in happy fellowship with Himself. How He will tell out to His beloved the long-pent-up secrets of His tender heart in that bright Home above!

It will be the *voice of rapture*—"Come up." We are below today in a world that crucified our Lord. Our Lord will never rest until He has us far above. This voice will be immediately answered by millions of redeemed saints, mounting upward, ascending heavenward to be in the presence of our wonderful Lord.

It is the *voice of revelation*. Our Lord will show us what lies in the "hereafter," what wonders, day by day, will startle

our vision, these deep mysteries of that glorious world above, the blueprint of the eternal ages brought for us to explore, so that we may understand what our Lord is yet to fulfill of His eternal purposes.

It will be the *voice of certainty*—"must be." Nothing can stay the movements of His omnipotent hand. He will sweep away every opposing barrier with the besom of destruction, crush every opposing foe, smash every rebellious enemy as the potter smashes the ruined vessel.

The Rapture will be *sudden*. "Immediately," not in stages, no long-drawn-out process, but in the twinkling of an eye we shall be translated from earth to Heaven—one moment here in blinding sorrow, the next moment in ecstatic joy; one moment here, tossed as a cork on life's heaving sea of care, heartache, and pain, the next moment serene and calm on the crystal sea, whose calm will never be broken; here in suffering, then immediately when the shout is heard, ushered into Glory; changed from silent graves into the crescendo of heavenly praise; no more tears, no more death, all will be gone when His voice speaks through the open door.

The Rapture will be *startling*. As a thief in the night, Jesus will come to take His own, not to steal but to remove His own personal possessions. It speaks of the startling effect it will have upon the world—millions disappearing in a moment without any warning; loved ones taken and loved ones searching with terrible anxiety, if by any means they can ascertain their mysterious departure, seeking in desperation to find out where their loved ones have gone. It will arouse the souls of men to an uncontrollable frenzy, but one soon to pass away as the world prepares for the coming Antichrist.

The Rapture will be *satisfying*. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Earth holds no satisfaction for any human soul, but Heaven will yield perfect satis-

faction because we shall then possess His likeness. When we see Him we shall be like Him. This will bring with it complete and eternal satisfaction. How can God's saints be fully satisfied in the absence of Jesus? It takes His sweet presence to satisfy these longing souls. How can we be fully satisfied when our hearts are crushed and broken, when graves are filling with the bodies of our loved ones? How can satisfaction be fully attained when our homes are broken, leaving us to mourn our loss as we gaze with breaking heart upon empty beds and empty chairs?

Thank God, when Jesus opens the door of Heaven and comes to take us within, He Himself will break many things in that blessed moment of all moments. He will break the silence of the ages by His call to Glory, this silence of death. He will break the tombs that hold in their cold and cruel embrace the bodies of those we "have loved long since, and lost awhile." Christ Jesus will flood our graveyards with mighty angels, and what a busy time they will have rolling away the stones as they did for our Lord on earth! If the picture given is so intensely sweet, then what shall the realization of this glorious reality be! (John 12:1-4.) Glory, endless Glory, with Him!

CHAPTER 10

THE THRONE SET IN HEAVEN

WHO OCCUPIES IT, AND THE ELDERS AND LIVING CREATURES WHO SURROUND IT

The sovereignty of God is one of the most forgotten truths of the Bible. Because men have forgotten it, human history has been filled with wars of bloodshed and tears. The Book of Revelation is a solemn reminder of the important truth that on Heaven's throne sits an occupant who is still and always will be the sovereign ruler of His own universe. As such He permits no devil, demon, angel, power, dictator, monarch, emperor, or any other usurper to wrench from His grasp the scepter of omnipotence. He wields it today and will do so in the future as He has done in the past. He will, when occasion demands, smite with that scepter, whether it be in grace or judgment, any nation or person that ignores His absolute sovereignty.

He will yet deal with Christendom as He has dealt with any crisis that arose in past ages. This is the great theme of Revelation.

In chapter 4 of Revelation, grace will have left this earth. Mercy despised will have flown away. Mercy will plead no more. Grace will no longer beseech fallen men. God is seen again in the act of rising in righteous indignation. The rod of justice is again in His hands, and woe to the inhabitants of the world. He is about to clear the way to the earthly throne that Christ Jesus, earth's rejected King, should have

received on His first advent. As sovereign ruler of this universe God is about to begin sweeping away every opposing adversary, demon, dragon, system, power, throne, empire, beast, antichrist—everything that hinders the ascent of His chosen King to His own glorious throne (Matt. 25:31).

The Church will have been raptured. It will have left this earthly scene. The Church must be removed to Glory before God can act in these awful calamities. He will quietly remove His Church to her destined Home, where for over nineteen centuries the hand of our Lord has been busy preparing the Home of His Bride. If the amount of time consumed should mean anything then, what a glorious place this must be! Creation required six days; the ark of Noah, 120 years; Solomon's Temple, seven years.

After the Church has passed through the opened door of Heaven and our heavenly Bridegroom has called His blood-bought Bride to her eternal Home, then the throne of God will be revealed. In this age of sovereign grace it is silent, so silent that hearts often cry out for that silence to be broken. The cavils of the blatant blasphemer who challenges that throne to break its dread silence are all ignored by a forbearing and long-suffering Creator. But, in this fourth chapter of Revelation, its silence has ceased and it is bursting out in terrible fury upon an apostate Christendom and a Christ-rejecting world. It is silent today because Christ Jesus of Calvary sits upon it. At His ascension, He turned it from a throne of judgment to a throne of grace. In this chapter Jesus is absent from that throne, and in the next chapter we see Him standing. He has risen from His Father's throne, and His coronation is now about to take place. This is to place Him on His own glorious throne on earth.

But this awful heavenly throne has an occupant. It is the sovereign ruler of this universe. He cannot be described as to His person; no one could describe to us His face and

being. He is indescribable as such. He can only be described in symbolic language. Two beautiful stones are used in this description. Jasper is noted for its brilliant light, its crystal glory tells out the glory of God as to His nature, for God is light (1 John 1:5).

The sardine or sardius stone tells out the glory of God in redemption. It is a reddish stone. In redemption God's greatest glories shine. Its glorious rays reach us through the red blood of Calvary, shining through the redemptive work of God's own dear Son. We know God more by the Redeemer's blood than by any other means, both in time and in eternity.

A rainbow is seen encircling the throne. When we see a rainbow on earth, only half a circle is seen, but in this one a perfect circle meets the eye. In Genesis, the rainbow was seen after the storm; here it is seen before the storm. This mighty and glorious arch of mercy surrounds the glorious throne. The rainbow is the pledge of covenant mercy, a holy God has promised to spare the world again of a flood, so this rainbow surrounds His throne, and, in the approaching doom and judgment of our race, in wrath He will remember mercy. Though the fires of wrath will burn brightly, yet there will be a tempering of these sore tragedies by the mercy and covenant of a merciful yet thrice holy God.

The color of the heavenly rainbow is like that of an emerald. It is not red, the fiery color so harmful to the human eye, but the restful color of green. God's eye will rest upon this bow, hovering above the clouds of wrath, a type of the cross of our Saviour, and He will remember again that on earth His precious Son bled to redeem this world for Himself.

Around that throne are four and twenty thrones: they are the thrones of kings and priests unto God. John calls the occupants of these thrones "elders." They are enthroned as

kings, crowned as kings. The richest gold bought for them by Him who wore the crown of thorns rests upon their brows—gold that will never tarnish or lose its luster throughout eternity.

Whom do they represent? They doubtless represent the redeemed of all ages. When our Lord descends to the regions of the air at His second coming, all the saints, Old Testament saints and New Testament saints, will be caught up to be with Him. The number here is symbolic. Twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament times, twelve apostles of the New, representing the millions of those who have died in faith, and who are Christ's at His coming (1 Cor. 15:23).

They are before His throne, at home in His presence, never to go out again, but happy and rejoicing in His presence. They are clothed, clothed in the righteousness of Christ. They are rewarded, and golden harps fill their hands. Melody in worship is now to be heard far above where tears are all unknown. These golden harps will be making melody to God and His Christ throughout all eternity.

As John looks upon this heavenly throne, it becomes the storm center of the universe. It bursts out in violent action, greater by far than Sinai. It breaks the silence of Heaven and earth. God now as the moral governor of His own universe begins to assert Himself and take unto Himself His power to judge. Holiness, for ages outraged, now is about to act.

The Holy Spirit also is seen in Heaven. In the Church, He is viewed in unity (Eph. 4:4) as one Spirit. In Heaven, when the sovereignty of God is in view, He is spoken of as "lamps of fire." Fire is used many times in symbol of the blessed Holy Spirit. Seven being the number of perfection, He is viewed in the perfect testimony to the purposes of Almighty God. The seven lampstands of Asia have by this time absolutely failed to bear the testimony the risen Lord

had assigned to them, and are now extinguished. What remains of them after the Lord's second coming have turned away from all that is known as Christianity and are now to become the nucleus of the Scarlet Woman. Philadelphia representing the true Church has been removed to Glory and is not destined to pass through the horrors of the Great Tribulation that now is to try the earth (Rev. 3:10).

The calling of the Bride being ended, the great and unseen Eliezer (typified in Gen. 24) has safely brought the loved Bride of our heavenly Isaac home to the Bridegroom. While here on earth He had patiently revealed the Father and the Son.

As the custodian of the unsearchable riches of Christ, He had bestowed their earnest of the purchased possession upon her. He has sought her, found her, won her, detached her, and, becoming her guardian Guide and Blessor, now has the Bride of Christ in the chambers of His own sweet presence. Loosed from her earthly ties, detached from earthly scenes, her eyes now feast upon that blessed and lovely face of Christ Jesus. Gold upon her person, jewels so rare, glory before her—but all forgotten as she gazes on her Lover's face. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit appears as tongues of fire, in Heaven as lamps of fire.

There is a sea of glass before that august throne. To understand these symbols aright, we must go back to Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 7:23). The laver was made to cleanse the feet and hands of the priests of Jehovah. Pure hands and pure feet were demanded. Let us as God's priests see that our hands, our toil for God, and our feet, or our walk, are in purity and holiness. Now in Heaven there is no need for the laver. We shall be in the likeness of our Lord Jesus, spots and stains will be forever gone. In the moral likeness of Christ we shall forever be free from inbred sin; the old flesh shall never trouble us again. The sea is

crystal. There will be in His presence no defilement; we shall sin no more. No more need of the laver, for we shall be eternally and absolutely holy. Christ will be seen and reflected in every thought and action. Peter is there, but he curses no more. Thomas is there, but he doubts no more. Mary is there, but she weeps no more. Paul has no thorn. Every saint of God shining forth in sinless perfection. Clean every whit.

The sea is crystal. The waves of earthly sorrow cease to roll, the billows of earthly care are forever calmed in His presence, heartaches and blinding grief are things of the past.

There are four "beasts," or living creatures, in the midst and round about that throne. Great is the mystery that surrounds these mysterious beings. Many have been the views held by expositors of the past. Whatever else may be said about them, they seem to represent closely the cherubim of the Old Testament.

They made their appearance on earth immediately after sin ruined our first parents. They were stationed outside of the Garden of Eden. There, linked to the flaming sword and, maintaining the claims of the holiness of God, they barred access to Paradise, keeping fallen man from any approach to the tree of life, source of immortality to the human race. Thus in mercy God instituted death for His fallen creatures.

They are seen again over the mercy seat in the holy of holies, made of one solid piece of matchless gold, covering the sparkling golden lid of the mercy seat and gazing down upon it in holy contemplation, protecting any approach to the presence of Jehovah.

The living creatures of Revelation 4 are seen as perpetually confessing in adoration the perfect holiness of God. They are not still as were the golden cherubim, but know no rest, ceaselessly through time and eternity, with holy

energy and zeal, they declare the glorious character and holiness of Almighty God. As to symbol, the likeness of one of these creatures to the lion would remind us of Matthew's Gospel, the theme there being the Lion of the tribe of Judah, regal and royal as Israel's promised Messiah. The likeness to a calf or an ox would bring us to Mark's Gospel, which speaks of the patient suffering servant of Jehovah. The face of a man suggests Luke's Gospel, where the tenderness of the humanity of Christ is brought out. The eagle points to John's Gospel, where the deity of Jesus our Lord is emphasized. These creatures are an interesting study, and they will yield much profit if caution and wisdom are exercised apart from speculation. They give the signal for heavenly worship before the Lamb is crowned (4:10), they join in that wonderful acclamation when the Lamb receives the scroll (5:8). The worship meetings recorded in Revelation are a source of inspiring study.

CHAPTER 11

THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK

WHO IS WORTHY TO OPEN IT?

As the fifth chapter of Revelation opens, the deafening roar of thunder from the throne seems hushed for some great event, suspended till the great question of the ages is once and forever settled. Every eye in Heaven is focused on a solitary hand. The hand of the occupant of that central glorious throne. In that hand is clasped a scroll. It has been securely reserved for this impending crisis. It is written within and on the backside, not left to the changing conditions of time or fortunes of war. "It is written"—what words of comfort and assurance in days like these that are upon us! The book is a scroll, one side may show the description of the property or kingdom to be redeemed, the other the names of the witnesses that are concerned in the transaction (Jer. 32; Ruth 4).

The book is sealed. Seals speak of security, privacy, ownership. No man can break what God seals. Its contents are safe. The seer is startled as the challenge is heard. This challenge brings a crisis; it changes Heaven into a place of difficulty and bitter tears. How strange no one could meet this challenge! No man in Heaven, yet millions of men will be there—great men of the past—Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, David, prophets and kings of all ages. Peter, Paul, and saints of all ages will be there. Yet none will dare claim this scroll, the title deed to a lost inheritance awaiting a Redeemer. No man on earth, although on earth there will be anti-

christs, kings, beasts, dictators galore, yet none will dare to claim the scroll, for they have no means of redemption. The price is beyond what they can pay. No man in hell—no Nero or Alexander, no Caesar or any other fallen monarch or potentate will dare to lift up his covetous eyes from the caverns of that prison house, and claim from a righteous God the world sovereignty they once held fast.

The saddening sight is too much for the seer. He cries out in heart-breaking sorrow. Bitter tears flow down his cheeks.

But behold, someone is approaching the weeping John. Someone has seen his distress, and now goes forward to cheer his heart and dry his falling tears. Heaven is always so interested in broken hearts. Do not despair, weeping saint of God! The occupation of Heaven is to heal wounds that earth cannot heal.

Who does John hear? It is one who understands, one whose heart on earth went through similar experiences—an elder, not one of the cherubim; not an angel, but a subject of redemption. What is his message?

“Don’t weep any more, John. Dry your eyes and stop those falling tears. Let not your heart be troubled, the crisis is past. See that glorious One, the Lion of the Tribe of Juda.”

John lifted his eyes and there stood a Lamb as newly or freshly slain. Calvary will never become worn out or commonplace to redeemed hearts, as eternal years roll by. When we find our hearts here on earth getting cold to that wounded Lamb of Calvary, then beware. In Heaven, Calvary shines in eternal freshness. As the Lamb He is known from now on through the Apocalypse. It is our Lord seen in His sacrificial glory, the glory of redemption.

As the Lion, He is the coming King of the royal line of David. As the Root, He is David’s Creator and Lord. As

the Branch, He comes from David's seed in His incarnation (Matt. 1). His name, the Lion, referring to the king of beasts, tells of the varied aspects of His majesty and of His irresistible advance to conquer His foes. Both symbolic names are mentioned here, and what food for thought and meditation do they bring. The lion in all its power and majesty, the lamb, symbol of meekness, innocence, sacrifice, humbleness, weakness.

As the "Lion of the tribe of Juda" He hath prevailed. He is the powerful Conqueror coming now to lay claim to His royal throne, and to be invested with the rights and privileges of redemption. As the glorified Lamb, He has paid the stupendous price of redemption in drops of His own precious redeeming blood. The scroll belongs to Him and Him alone. Jesus as Redeemer has paid the awful price, and is proclaimed worthy.

He is worthy because of personal worthiness. No sin was ever found in Him. No sinful nature ever disturbed His pure and holy and spotless soul. He always walked in His Father's will, and never once caused that Holy Father a needless heartache.

He is worthy because of the right of creation. His almighty hand brought forth these wonders of the universe, and at the dawn of time worlds of magnitude beyond all understanding and stars in creative glory in numbers unknowable to the wisest astronomer formed a starry and glorious robe of Christ as Lord of all creation (Heb. 1).

He is worthy by the right of promise (Psa. 2). This earth has been promised Him for ages. It is now to be given into His hand. The cavils and fierce opposition of His enemies have been ignored.

He is worthy because of the right of descent. He is David's "greater Son." This is the great theme of Peter's Pentecostal sermon (Acts 2:25-30).

He is worthy because of the right of covenant. God has promised untold blessings to those who keep His Law. Our Lord kept the Law and made it honorable. In it He daily found His delight. His every word and deed expressed, in absolute holiness, the nature and character of God (Heb. 10:7-9).

He is worthy because of the right of relationship. He is the only begotten Son. As such, He is the heir to the inheritance. As such, the Father will give all things into His hand (Heb. 1:2).

The song of the redeemed (v. 9) reveals something even more glorious and grander than all these. The Lamb is worthy because He was slain on Calvary. In that brutal slaying, He has paid the awful price demanded for complete redemption, His own most precious blood. The Kinsman-Redeemer has fully satisfied all the claims of the Law and the demands of justice, and the highest court in the universe now declares that He alone is worthy because of Calvary. Worthy because of His obedience in death, He now ascends the golden path to the Father's throne. The scroll is His by right.

Some day our eyes will feast upon this majestic sight; with awe and rapture we shall behold our Beloved going to that throne, and the coronation of our Lord will take place. As the hosts of Heaven stand awed and silent, Christ Jesus is invested with the sovereignty of God, and on Him are conferred all the rights of the Kingdom. The wondering hosts of Glory can remain silent no longer; from every heart leaps forth the cry of adoration, and down they fall prostrate before the Monarch of redeeming glory. As redeemed they sing, as kings they praise, as priests they worship that blessed Lamb, excellent in the glory of His atonement.

Scarcely have the paeans of adoration from the redeemed ceased when the hosts of angels begin to sing their praise

(v. 12). What vast numbers of these glorious beings will be witnessing this coronation sight! They witnessed the mock coronation of their Lord in Pilate's hall. Startled and alarmed, they waited for His command to avenge, but never came that word, their swords remained undrawn. How gladdened those sinless beings will be when they gaze upon their Lord as He is awarded the rights of redemption! True, they cannot sing as those who have been redeemed, for these angels have never fallen. Because of this they are in the outer circle, they are not so near to God as redeemed sinners. Oh, the mystery of God's grace! They know what justice is, what law and righteousness are, what holiness and judgment are, but mercy and forgiving grace they, in their sinless state, have never experienced. They were never lost. They never knew what sin was, so redemption is an unknown experience to them. God did not redeem the angels that sinned, but shut them up in fetters of everlasting darkness and despair. In the acclamation of His worthiness the angels acknowledge the Lamb as worthy of a sevenfold honor. Angels appreciate the matchless worth of the outcast of Calvary.

And now universal worship is heard from every creature in three spheres (v. 13). Heaven, earth, and the underworld join now in one great act of adoration to the occupant of the throne and to the Lamb. They are now linked together in worship by the creatures who must now acknowledge the worthiness of the Father and the Son. They ascribe a four-fold glory, four being the number of earth. You will notice that through the Lord Jesus the Father receives His worship (v. 13). This has always been and ever will be, and only through our precious Lord does the Father receive His highest glory in creation, redemption, and glory.

Thus will the coronation of our Lord Jesus become an accomplished fact. From now on in the Book of Revelation we shall see what this will mean to His Church, to Christendom, and to the world.

CHAPTER 12

THE RIDERS OF THE APOCALYPSE

THEIR TERRIBLE JUDGMENTS UPON THE EARTH

Now, as the sixth chapter of Revelation begins, the great moment has arrived and the seals are to be broken. As soon as the Lamb has broken the first seal, the strange voice of the living creature is heard. It is not the tender voice of mercy, or the pleading of the love of Calvary, or the sweet invitation of God's matchless grace, but the deafening roar of thunder, the voice of Sinai which now is to judge the world for the outraged Law of God—that Law which has been defied for ages. Thunder is the language of retribution (Exod. 9:27). It makes the stoutest heart tremble. It is not an invitation to the seer to come and see, but the invitation of the living creature to the great actors of this drama of judgment to appear on the stage of time. The fateful hour has struck. As the Lamb, our Lord becomes the Administrator of this great estate of nature. He is to act now as the Kinsman-Redeemer. The living creatures here become His chosen agents to enforce His plans. As such they call in thunderous tones, "Come," "Come," "Come," "Come."

What do these horses and their respective riders represent? A horse in Scripture is the symbol of strength, of swiftness, and of conquest. These horses represent human agencies under the control of satanic powers. The symbol of the horse then would convey to our minds the thought that they are to be irresistible, powerful.

Who is the rider of the white horse? No name is given to identify this rider. The only names given in the vision are in the breaking of the fourth seal. The first horse is white. Numerous attempts have been made to identify its rider. Some have maintained that he is the Lord Jesus, coming back to this earth as the Prince of Peace, going forth in peaceful conquest to establish His millennial reign. A careful study of Scripture will soon correct this view, and will reveal to the student of prophecy some interesting facts about our Lord's personal return to this earth. After this first rider, will follow devastation, bloodshed, universal war, and horrors never known before to the human race. After Christ returns as Prince of Peace, wars will forever cease, mankind will be blessed as never before, bloodshed will be banished, and the whole world will enjoy the smile of God in blessing. Our Lord as rider of a white horse will appear, but not until after the seven years of judgment introduced by these four riders (Rev. 19:11).

Some have said that here we have pictured the peaceful conquest of the Gospel going forth to all the world before the end shall come. Read prayerfully 2 Thessalonians 2, and all becomes so plain. The rapture of the Church closes the day of grace, the Holy Spirit is withdrawn, and, as far as Christendom is concerned, the light of the Gospel of the grace of God is offered to them no longer. They are abandoned to the satanic delusions of the apostate age.

Two "princes of peace" are destined to appear on earth. These princes are found in Revelation. The last one is the true Prince of Peace, which argues that the first one must be a counterfeit. Turning back to Daniel we discover the clue to the identity of the first white horse rider. Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks centers around Israel, her land and her Messiah. The weeks are weeks of years. The total would be 490 years to consummate the crowning part of the proph-

ecy. It begins with the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, not the rebuilding of the Temple by Ezra (Neh. 2). The prophecy, to state it briefly, is divided into four parts, the total of years being 70×7 , or 490 years. The first seven weeks dates from the restoration of the city of Jerusalem after the midnight survey of Nehemiah in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, 445 B.C., Nisan. The second is 62 weeks of years, or 434 years, ending with the cutting off of the Messiah. This would give 434 plus 49, or 483 years. This period was completed when our Lord officially rode upon the back of a borrowed ass into the city of Jerusalem and was rejected by the representatives of the Jewish nation. On that very day of His triumphant entry, these 69 weeks were finished exactly to the day, and the Messiah was cut off in death shortly afterward. Thus the Cross severed Israel's covenant connection with Jehovah. She lost all her claims on God in that fateful cry in the judgment hall, "We have no king but Caesar." Taking sides with Satan, Israel took sides against her God and His chosen Messiah. Since that day a veil has been upon her heart. Cast off by God, she has been a nation without a city, a temple, a sacrifice, and many other national blessings (Hos. 3:4). This was predicted by her Messiah in His Olivet discourse (Matt. 24).

The cutting off of the Messiah by a violent death, cruel but vicarious, stopped the prophetic clock of God, and, since Calvary, time for Israel is no longer measured by God, this age of grace being a parenthetical age or dispensation. No mention of any events transpiring between the end of this period and the beginning of the seventieth week is made, nor is the length of intermediate age of grace given.

The third division is the last week of years. This is divided into two parts. The latter half is the more important of the two. This is by far the most important space of time

in the "times of the Gentiles." The Book of Revelation deals with these three and one-half years more in detail than any other portion of the Scriptures. Be sure to link Daniel and Revelation together when studying these years. The Jew will be back in his land; he is going back today in unbelief. Great movements are forging ahead today, and this subject is claiming world attention. The present movements in Palestine are most significant, and they demand earnest but cautious attention on the part of the prophetic student.

The rider of the first white horse is a world conqueror—irresistible, great. He holds a bow. To his crownless brow is given a crown. Invincible, he sweeps all his foes away, and marches as a mighty world conqueror, because no opposing foe can stay his hand. Keeping this in mind, and the outline of the last prophetic week of Daniel's prophecy, we can, by linking the two together, identify the horse and its rider. He is the coming *false* prince of peace. He appears on earth to counterfeit the true Prince of Peace, Israel's coming Messiah, who is to usher in the Kingdom and the millennium, so glorious and abiding in its glory and blessings. Entering the land of Palestine as a friend of the Jew, he will sign a solemn covenant with Israel granting them sovereign rights as a nation, restoring to them their Temple worship and sacrifices for seven years (Dan. 9:27). As soon as the national sovereignty of Israel is recognized by this great conqueror and her covenant of protection signed, the pendulum of God's clock again begins to swing, and time is measured again. This prophecy now begins to be history. It can be easily seen that this white horse rider is the Roman prince of an empire that must rise again to fulfill the great prophecies of the Book of Daniel. While the full details are not disclosed, it reasonably supposes the Roman Empire, rebuilt and revived by this great monarch of the future.

We must not confuse the first phase of this empire with the Dragon-controlled state outlined in Revelation 13. The first might be called the political rise, the second its satanic rise, when this resurrected Roman Empire will pass into the absolute control of the "dragon" and his hordes of demons from the abyss.

The false prince of peace will bring to the world what it has long desired—a warless world, a millennium, a utopia, when men will change the machinery of war into the implements of peace. The whole world will welcome this prince of peace, and what a triumphant career he will have! The advent of this peaceful conqueror will startle and electrify the nations of earth. The world is ready at this moment for his advent. They want a peace without the peace of the Cross; they want a religion destitute of the atoning blood. They want a Bible without any truth in it. They crave the blessings, but reject the Blessor. This man will give them all they want, and, in their ecstasy and blindness, they shall raise the cry, "Peace and safety" (1 Thess. 5:3).

No statement is made as to how long a time will elapse between the breaking of each seal. Apparently there are no preliminaries, and now the second seal is broken, opening the scroll and revealing more of its secret contents.

The living creature speaks again, inviting another dreadful actor to appear on the scene. A red horse and its hideous rider appear. A sword is given him, dripping with human blood. His horse is red; it is gory and crimson with the bloodshedding of millions of the human race. It is madly galloping through fields of blood, blood so deep that it reaches to the bridle; and then, like Ezekiel's river, this river of blood flows on till this beast of blood can swim in the mighty stream as it overflows like Jordan's river of death fed by the torrents of the blood of the murdered dead that fall as victims of this colossal murderer.

But where has the millennium gone that brightened the hearts of men? Why are its blissful benefits cut so short? Anything that the Devil or his agents gives has nothing of a permanent value. The Devil's heart is very generous in giving false hopes, false peace, and false joys.

Reader, examine your heart to find out what is the basis of your peace of soul, and upon what basis it rests. Anything less than the blood of His Cross is a false peace instilled in your soul through the wiles of the Devil.

Man cannot prevent war no matter how he tries. The world is red today, reddened by the blood of the millions slain so ruthlessly in World War II. The hideous shadow, slowly but surely creeping over the world today, is the red shadow of Communism. Some day men will get all the red they want—this red horse rider will supply their desires to the full. This fiend, this butcher, will slash right and left, cutting down, as the grim reaper, millions of the human race. In his heart he holds life cheap; his girdle holds no scabbard as he races along in his craving for blood. Thank God, he is under divine restraint; his power is only delegated power. His sword is not his own, it is entrusted to him as a steward, and with it he will end the false millennium set up by the Devil. As a robber he robs the world of what it so sorely needs, and for universal peace he substitutes universal war.

As the Lamb breaks the third seal, the third living creature calls for the third rider to appear. A black horse hastily appears, galloping across earth's blood-soaked lands. The rider of the red horse quickly dispatches his victims. Now the rider of the black horse slowly tortures them to death in the horrible torture chambers of famine. Universal famine now follows in the train of universal war. The horse is black. This is the symbol of hopelessness, despair, and darkness. The rider holds in his thin, bony, starved hand the

balances. By these the necessities of life are measured out. Famine always closely follows in the path of war. Food crops are scarce—wheat, the food of humans, grows little on the devastated fields of war; and barley, the food of animals, seems to be unwilling to grow, so the food crops are scarce. Seemingly it takes a day's work and its meager wages to purchase enough for a single meal. In this third seal judgment, millions will perish by the horrible death of starvation.

The fourth seal is next broken, and the fourth living creature calls, "Come." Now the most dreadful judgment falls. Across the stage of time gallops a pale horse, livid, corpse-like. His name is given, and that name is Death. He has a companion rider, whose name is Hell. These two arch-fiends and archenemies of the human race are now at large. Unfettered and defiant, they begin their diabolical mission. Apparently there are two riders here, and it is not unreasonable to suppose there are two separate horses. Hell follows hard behind Death. Death is in the saddle, and holds the reins spurring on his dreadful steed. Hell is his companion rider gleaning the fields that Death has covered, gathering to his fiery bosom the fallen victims of the king of terrors to suffer through a long eternity. Their sphere of operations is an abandoned Christendom, where once the Gospel shone in all its brightness. Those professors, who refused through unbelief to accept its light, now behold, terror-stricken, these two archmurderers of human souls running wild through Christendom on the commission to kill the body and cast the soul into hell. They have four agencies—the sword, hunger, death, and beasts—with which to perform their ghastly work. They alone of all the riders are identified definitely by name.

These appalling calamities cannot take place until the true Church has been removed to Glory. While believers

are safe with their Lord, these judgments will be taking place in a world that God, in His righteous wrath, has utterly abandoned to judgment and given over to the Devil and his demons.

CHAPTER 13

THE TRIBULATION MARTYRS

IS THERE AN INTERMEDIATE STATE BETWEEN DEATH AND RESURRECTION?

The Book of Revelation is a book of martyrdom. Its main theme is about a martyr, the greatest martyr the world ever saw—the Crucified of Calvary. Thank God His death is more than martyrdom. His death was a death of *sacrifice*. He is our sinbearer. Through this wonderful Book, the martyrs' blood runs like a mighty river, like a reddish stream, until it reaches the throne of God.

The first martyr church was Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11). The first company of martyrs after the true Church is raptured is seen in Revelation 6, after the fifth seal is broken. There may be many things we cannot understand about these martyrs, but there are some things that seem perfectly clear, and the following facts are plain:

They have been slain. They have suffered violent death and, while their bodies are not mentioned and may lie in unknown graves or remain unburied, they are still conscious and their souls are preserved and are in communion with God.

They are living. Death does not end all, and natural death does not mean extinction of being. They are in the unclothed or disembodied state, conscious and active.

They are praying. God always hears and answers the prayers of His people. Though He may delay, He will

assuredly answer. The day of grace is past when the fifth seal is broken, and these imprecatory prayers are in perfect keeping with these martyrs.

They are witnessing to the holiness of Almighty God.

They are waiting until others in like manner are martyred in the Great Tribulation. Their toil is over, their sufferings ended, and their service finished. They rest from their labors.

They are rewarded. The white robe of righteousness has been awarded them. Greater rewards are in store for them—crowns, cities, and gifts in Glory.

These martyrs are the first of those who will be killed for the "word of God" and their "testimony" *after* the Church has been called to eternal Glory. The martyrs of the Church have already gone with the redeemed at the Rapture, and at this time will be safe with Christ in Glory.

Eleven great principles stand out clearly in the breaking of the fifth seal:

1. The patience of God is greater than the patience of His people. Who has patience like Him? Read, in Romans 15, His three beautiful titles: the God of patience and consolation (v. 5); the God of hope (v. 13); the God of peace (v. 33).

2. The fact of existence after death. The fifth seal proves beyond the shadow of doubt to any reasonable mind that, after the body is dead, the soul exists in consciousness and in the full capacity of personality.

3. The character of God is absolutely holy. The blasphemous libel of the Modernist today against the God of the Bible is that He is a "tribal deity." Throughout the Revelation, the holiness of God is continually emphasized. The living creatures proclaim it (4:8). These martyrs confess it (6:10). The overcomers over the Beast and his image sing it (15:3, 4). The angels of the vial judgments confirm

it (16:5-7). The redeemed in Heaven chant it (19:1, 2). Yes, God is absolutely holy and cannot allow sin to disturb or mar His universe forever. If men refuse to avail themselves of the divinely provided provision, there is no other destiny but to suffer eternally in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15).

4. God alone possesses the right to avenge. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." It is His peculiar prerogative. This is sometimes a hard lesson to learn and understand. Often we have a righteous urge to avenge ourselves, and it is not always easy to leave the matter with our God. But He has willed it so, and we must be calm and resigned to His sovereign will.

5. God hears and answers prayer—the prayers of His people. He may not always see fit to answer according to our time or request, but He hears, and in His own time will answer. It is a good thing He does not always answer as we request.

6. We do not always see the wisdom of waiting for God's time or understand His delays. It was so in the case of the sisters of Bethany, and our hearts may cry out, in the loneliness of midnight, "If thou hadst been here!" Oh, we think, what His presence would have prevented! But He knows best. He makes no mistakes. He knows the way. His time is always best. His wisdom far excels ours.

7. In the darkest crisis of human history God always has a remnant that faithfully serves Him. He raises up those who witness against the wrongs committed, and shine as stars in the darkest midnight. It has always been so.

8. Though the punishment of the wicked be postponed, it is sure. No sin will be left unpunished. God sometimes is slow, but He is sure. Let men beware, this day of grace will not last forever. Let men understand He will surely punish the wicked.

9. The reward of the righteous is sure and certain. The calamities may increase, but God is watching His people's sufferings, and He will yet reward in His own good time.

10. God has no favorites among His children. All are equal. All are dear to His loving heart. Here the message is that all must be together. There are others yet to come. The noble army of martyrs is not yet complete. Others are on the way.

11. The future is already planned by Almighty God. All events are fulfilling His great purposes. He allows no one to interfere with His plans. He has already made out the blueprints of the coming ages. The Devil and all his hosts of demons are helpless to hinder the final program that God, in infinite wisdom, has designed.

As chapter 7 of this marvelous Book opens, another company of martyrs is seen, cruelly murdered by the Beast and his satellites. This chapter is parenthetical, and we are permitted to look behind the scenes and see what events are happening on earth in relation to God's sealed ones.

Angels are busy again, and demons are also working feverishly as the end draws near. Angels are the guardians of God's dear people. They guard our holy dead as they guarded the tomb of our Lord. Angels are interested and busy in world affairs (Dan. 10). They were active in the incarnation and life of our blessed Lord. They show their interest in God's ways with men.

These are restraining angels. God always restrains until His purposes are carried out. Demons are under divine restraint, otherwise they would wreak their vengeance on the godly at their will. God restrains all the elements of this vast creation—the storm, the winds, the waves can go so far and no farther. The Holy Spirit restrains iniquity and apostasy (2 Thess. 2:7). He may use His Church or human law.

Not until His withdrawal can the tide of iniquity cross the frontier of its God-appointed place.

These angels in Revelation 7 restrain the four winds of Heaven. Compare Daniel 7:2. They hold fast these destructive forces, which are like wild dogs straining on the leash. God Almighty never allows any situation to get out of His control. No storm ever rises but what His power can still.

The angel sealer (Rev. 7:2) comes from the east, the place of judgment, where our first parents found the way back to Paradise barred, where the cherubim and the flaming sword prevented their return to their beautiful home, lost by sin. It was the east wind that blasted the good corn of Egypt (Gen. 41:23).

The Tribulation world will become a place where every brow is sealed. Those who are victims of the Antichrist must be sealed by this hateful foe of God and man, under penalty of death. But God never lets Satan get the pre-eminence. Before the winds release the fury of the tempest, God seals a godly remnant, who are to witness for Him during the horrors of the Great Tribulation. They are to be His witnesses.

The angel avengers who stand ready to hurt the earth must restrain their action until the servants of the living God are sealed. Thus God always stands ready to shield and protect those who trust Him.

It is important that we understand who the sealed ones are:

1. They are the servants of the living God. They are now going forth to serve Him in a world given over to Satan and his agents of evil. There can be little doubt that these servants of God will witness in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to those who have never heard the Gospel of God's grace in this dispensation (Matt. 24:14; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

2. They are Israelites. No one can belong to the 144,000 *now* because the Church is still here. The Church must be raptured before this company comes on the scene. Each tribe is mentioned, and Israel is moved upon by God to become His servants.

3. They are numbered. God knows them that are His. Israel will not have been exterminated when that time arrives in the program of God. His earthly people as the treasure hid in the field, lost to the world, will be brought forth to Him.

And now appears a mighty host of fruit unto God through the service of this godly remnant, far greater than man can number. They are a universal, cosmopolitan company, coming out of all nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues. They have a standing before the throne. They have a standing before the Lamb. They had no standing before the wicked ones of earth, and probably were quickly dispatched by their murderers by some horrible form of martyrdom. Now they are robed in the white robes of the King's providing. They hold the palms in their hands, because they are victors. As conquerors they are ready to welcome the great King at His glorious coming.

4. They are worshiping the God they serve and the Lamb they adore. They own no creature merit or human worthiness. At the sight of these worshipers, angels, elders, and living creatures fall down in rapt adoration of God, and once again another worship meeting in Heaven is in full swing. Notice the position of the angels. They form an outer circle (v. 11). We will be nearer than angels, close to the throne of God, and dear to the heart of God. Angels cannot remain unmoved when the redeemed bow in worship.

5. They are Tribulation saints. They have passed through the fires of persecution. There were saints before

Church saints. There will be saints after the Church has been raptured.

6. They are washed white. They have been through the fountain for sin and uncleanness. Not whitewashed, but washed whiter than the driven snow. There has been only one remedy for sin in every age, and that remedy is shed blood. Every pardoned and redeemed sinner owes everything to God's appointed way of atonement, and without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

7. Cruel sufferings are over for these martyrs. Their persecution is forever past. They shall hunger no more. Tears shall never trickle down their faces again. All want is past, and gone is all loneliness.

8. The Good Shepherd is the Lamb (Psa. 23). He satisfies their souls. He leads them beside living fountains of waters that never shall run dry. His staff comforts them. He feeds them with the choicest of earth's blessings. His presence protects them from all harm as they dwell under the shadow of the Almighty. No foe now can harm them as this wonderful One upon the throne dwells among them. He that toucheth them toucheth the apple of God's eye (Zech. 2:8).

CHAPTER 14

THE INVISIBLE WORLD OF EVIL SPIRITS

CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITH DEPARTED LOVED ONES?

In chapter 12 we saw something of the four individual riders of Revelation 6. In Revelation 9, mass attackers appear. The four riders brought terrible judgments upon the earth, but even more dreadful and severe judgments break over the world when the mass attackers come upon the scene. There are two armies mentioned, one of locusts, the other of horses. The first group are tormentors, or torturers. The second group are murderers.

What are these strange monstrosities—can we know? Here many leave the sane principles of Bible interpretation and wander off into fields of speculation. But if we may not know the meaning of every symbol given here, we can know what is the main outline of the chapter by keeping before us the setting of these dreadful judgments. Some have attempted to explain the locusts as representing false doctrines and doctrines of demons. Such a view holds that, after the Church is raptured, these hellish cults will sweep the world with their soul-destroying influence, blighting the souls of men and so causing these terrible torments. But we have soul-destroying cults with us today, cults and isms innumerable. Surely we do not need to wait for the locusts to bring them; they are here now. We can see their deadly work on every hand. They do not torment men, they do not urge men to commit suicide or pursue death, as do the

locusts and horses of Revelation 9, but just the opposite. These demon doctrines drug the soul and inoculate the human heart with the sense or feeling of a false security. Their victims do not suffer torment, but are lulled to sleep; their senses are deadened by the demon virus, conscience is murdered. In the grip of such doctrines men lose sin consciousness and God consciousness, and the fear of future punishment departs.

No, these locusts and horses of Revelation 9 are evil spirits liberated from the "bottomless pit," bent on making a hell on earth for the victims of their inhuman torture. In God's mercy, they now lie battened down and fettered. At the time of the trumpet judgments and after the blast of the fifth angel, as a judgment on men who have refused to yield to God and identify themselves by taking His seal in their foreheads, God Almighty allows the infernal regions to be opened and these spirit beings to be released. The key is given under the permissive will of an Almighty God, and the time and restrictions set beyond which these wicked spirits may not go. The locusts are given power. They are commanded, not left to go at will in their fanatical rage, but have a rigid commission which they must fulfill. They are not natural locusts, for they hurt not the grass, green things, or trees, as locusts of earth do. They are restricted to the unsealed of God. They rush here and there examining the brows of men, searching for unmarked brows, the rebels of mankind who have willfully refused this protecting mark of God's mercy. They are restrained from killing and are only to torment. They will sting, but it will not be the sting of death, yet death would be a happy release to their victims. The scorpion sting will be well nigh unbearable, as life then becomes hell on earth under these vicious tormentors. The time limit is given. For five months these

denizens of the bottomless pit are permitted to hurt their helpless victims.

On the other hand, when the army of horses and their riders appear after the sounding of the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13-21), their commission is to kill a third part of the inhabitants of the earth (v. 15).

The phenomenon of the invisible world of evil spirits is very deep and is surrounded with many difficulties. Many innocent, unsuspecting, well-meaning people are today being trapped in the meshes of demons who prey upon human sorrows. Morbid curiosity or the great desire of wistful hearts to communicate with their departed loved ones make some persons easy victims for lying, deceitful spirits. It is for these who are sincere and have such longing desires that these pages are written, for these who do not have a knowledge of the Scriptures to warn them of the great danger they will be in should they unwittingly be led into this snare of the Devil.

For those who, in spite of all that God has revealed in His Word of the danger in traffic in the realm of demons, and who persistently meddle in the realm of the evil unseen world and yield themselves body and soul to denizens of the pit, we can offer no hope, unless they will cease from a willing subjection to their demon masters and allow "the Nazarene," so called and so hated of demons, to come to their rescue and release them to the light and liberty of the children of God. There are several classes in the realm of fallen, invisible spirit beings mentioned in the Scriptures.

One class is referred to as confined "in everlasting chains under darkness" (Jude 6). These defiant angels invaded places that God had forbidden them to enter, and they have been chained and manacled in eternal darkness and despair. They are beyond all hope and are in perdition. For them no atonement has been made, no sacrifice ever given. Beyond

the reach of mercy, they can only await their dreadful doom of appearing before the bar of a holy God.

Another class of fallen beings is similar, but not confined to any prison. They are commonly called demons. These fallen, invisible beings are free to roam at the will and command of their demon princes, who, in turn, received their orders from Satan, "the prince of the power of the air."

There are many different kinds of demons. Some are unclean, morally they are debasing and are lepers of the underworld. They tempt men to acts of immorality and shame. They degrade to the unspeakable depths of vice and depravity, and belong to the slimy, filthy, swine trough of incest.

Some demons are dangerous. They are violent, ruthless, and have superhuman strength, having the power to smash into shivers every restraint placed upon them. The man from Gadara, in Mark 5, was a sample of this kind. All fetters were broken in pieces, chains forged by the local blacksmith were as threads once the wicked legion of demons that indwelt him chose to rid him of them.

There are wicked demons who are deeply religious, and this may account for the fact that so many cults and isms are rising today. These demons work in the realm of doctrine, formulating creeds and dogmas that are subtle substitutes for the great God-given truths of Christianity. They deceitfully attack the great doctrines of the Christian faith, under the pretense that their doctrines are supported by the Word of God.

Some demons inflict physical and mental infirmities upon those of whom they take possession. Our Lord found the land of Palestine overrun with such malicious and hateful demons. His commission of the Kingdom was aimed at the overthrow of these cruel captors of mankind. They inflicted blindness, insanity, lameness, dumbness, crookedness, and

numerous other bodily infirmities upon their unfortunate victims, and our Lord freed these victims and cast out the intruders.

Some wicked spirits impersonate the dead. They are destitute of human tenderness or compassion. They will stop at nothing, providing only they can ruin the soul and plunge their unsuspecting victim into hopeless perdition.

In the modern spiritist seance four persons are involved—the one seeking to commune with dead or departed loved ones; the medium, or demon-possessed man or woman; the familiar spirit, demon, or control; the dead person inquired for, who actually never appears, but is impersonated by a demon. It may be asked how a man or woman becomes a medium, or wizard, or witch. When a human being, sometimes closeted in a dark room in solitude, beseeches and entreats a demon to enter his heart, at last it does enter and possession takes place. At first this demon will reveal to its victim secrets far beyond the power of man. But later it begins to make life unbearable for its prisoner, until the unhappy victim becomes a raving lunatic, or ends his life of torment in suicide.

In the mercy and wisdom of an Almighty God, our Creator has ordained that none of these wicked beings may cross the threshold of a human heart without the human will assenting to its entrance. The same stands true in relation to the Lord Jesus. The blessed Saviour patiently and lovingly waits and knocks at the door of the human heart, but He will never force an entrance. The soul must invite, the will must assent, then the Lord of Glory enters, laden with the joys and blessings of life eternal.

But why should any sane person seek out a demon-controlled medium to communicate with loved ones? We should not wish our departed loved ones back. If they, in this life, were believers, think of where they are at this

moment. They are in the presence of their Saviour, gazing upon His sweet and lovely face. They are intensely happy, they are the gainers. They do not want to come back, they are waiting for us to join their happy throng, and it will not be very long before we shall be with them enjoying the ecstasies of that place to which ransomed spirits go. Those who die impenitent and out of Christ cannot return, even if they wish to. Luke 16 assures us of this. There is a great gulf fixed and its yawning chasm no one can ever cross; there is no bridge to span that terrible gulf. Therefore any message purported to come from departed loved ones or friends through the offices of a medium is a counterfeit, and any materialization of the dead is a cruel impersonation by demon agents.

Furthermore, God forbids our intercourse with any of the roaming rebels of the invisible world who impersonate our loved ones. It appears, from their longing to enter and abide in human bodies, that before their fallen state they once possessed bodies. In the days of our Lord, when deprived of indwelling human victims, demons craved a habitation rather than to be disembodied. In one instance, swine, though filthy creatures themselves, would not allow demons to inhabit their flesh, but chose to commit suicide in the sea.

For those who may doubt that demons really exist, a careful study of the life of our Lord should convince any honest doubter of the awful reality of these wicked spirits. Demons are not always found in dens of iniquity and squalid vice, but were in our Lord's day found even in the synagogue, the professed house of God. These unclean spirits cried out in terror in His presence, or "screamed out," as Weymouth gives it (Mark 3:11). They fell at His feet confessing His absolute deity. They had to flee before our Lord as He drove them before Him. At times they were compelled to keep quiet in His presence (Mark 3:12). Demons in the sea stirred

up its mighty elements in an effort to drown the lowly Nazarene when they thought that He was in their cruel grasp. They did not want Him to enter their stronghold in Gadara, where abode one of their victims (Mark 5:1-18). Christ Jesus holds the destiny of demons, of angels, and of men in His hands. They must obey that name at which they cringe with fear and trembling. These rebels of the universe, these invisible communists, these roaming, destroying agents tremble at the mention of the precious name of Jesus.

Demons get stirred up when the true Gospel is preached in the power of the Spirit today. These willing slaves and vassals of Satan know that for them trouble is brewing. This was the order of the day when the disciples of the early church went forth in the power of the Spirit. This may be our experience today, for demons must depart when Christ's name is preached.

CHAPTER 15

THE DRAGON AND THE MAN CHILD

SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE SCARLET AGE

In the first part of chapter 11 of Revelation, which is within the parenthetical portion that began with chapter 10 and continues to verse 14 of chapter 11, God's city and God's people are again the foreground. The Temple is being measured, and this indicates that interest is again focused upon Israel, and one can readily see how the stage is being set for the most terrible drama of all history, the Great Tribulation. You will notice that the Beast, which is the resurrected Roman Empire in its last satanic form and out of the abyss, is upon the scene (v. 7).

In the Holy City, two witnesses make their appearance (v. 3). No names are given to these two strange men, so we cannot be positive as to their identity. They wear the robes of mourning, of calamity, and deepest sorrow. In the very darkest of earth's night of apostasy they are two great burning and shining lights of witness before God, the sovereign Lord and ruler of this earth.

Like Elijah of old, they can shut the heavens at will until the days of their prophetic mission is finished. Like Moses they have power to change the waters into blood, and they can smite this unhappy world with every plague horrible to mankind. No doubt many attempts will be made to murder them. Sinful men will attempt, by every means, to put them out of action, but from their mouths will come devastating

fire consuming every foe that assails them. They will be invincible until their work on earth is done. They are to hurl forth their anathemas for 1,260 days, and not one day can the Devil cut short. But when their testimony is finished, the Beast, now on the prophetic scene, will fight them, and God will allow the Beast to conquer them. Operating here on earth this Dragon-controlled and energized empire will cruelly terminate the noble ministry of these two Heaven-sent prophets, and they will lie slain in the street, exposed to the ridicule and mockery of their hateful foes. Common decency would afford them a burial, but these hearts are hopeless and without feeling. There are now no "valiant men of Gilboa" to remove and bury the slain, no disciples, like those of John the Baptist, to place to rest the honored dead. They are murdered in cold blood amid the very scenes where their Lord and Master was crucified.

Chapter 12 is one of the most difficult to explain, and there have been many attempts to interpret these mysterious characters and events. It is generally conceded that chapter 12 really begins with verse 19 of the preceding chapter. In chapter 4, the storm center of the universe is the throne of the sovereign Ruler of this vast creation. The throne is the place of God's unchallenged and absolute sovereignty. In chapter 12, the storm with its deafening crash of thunder is coming from the heavenly Temple, the place of His absolute holiness. From this opened Temple, five great powerful and destructive agencies (v. 19) are released upon an abandoned world.

The Holy Spirit has used a simple method in this great Book of Revelation. The first verse of Revelation contains the keynote, "He made it known by signs *or* symbols" (marginal note, Newberry Bible). The symbols and signs in this Book are many, but as a general rule they are explained by

the Holy Spirit, thus enabling us to understand these deep mysteries.

You will have noticed in this chapter that there are three symbolic characters—the star-crowned woman, the scarlet Dragon, and the Man Child. When dealing with signs and symbols we must exercise special care in the proper identification of the article or person symbolized, otherwise we shall go far astray in our interpretation. Quite a few claims have been advanced, at one time or another, concerning the woman and the Man Child.

Papal Rome also has sought to prove that she is the sun-robed woman with her star-studded crown. Some have sought to show that this woman is the Church of the New Testament. This could not be, for many reasons. The Church did not bring into this world the Lord Jesus. He established the Church. "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). The Church proceeds from its Founder and not Christ from the Church.

Let us try to identify these three symbolic characters. Let us take the easiest one first—the Dragon. Notice the list of names given in verse 9 of chapter 12. They, beyond all reasonable doubt, identify this mysterious symbol of hate as Satan, the Devil. His dreadful history as the great foe of God and man, of truth, of love and holiness clearly point with the finger of conviction to one person alone. The Dragon of our chapter is the terrible being who dared to cross the pathway of our Lord in the days of His flesh and in arrogant pride dared to ask for himself worship which alone belongs to Almighty God. These names reveal his work and character from the Garden of Eden to the end of time, from his fall from dazzling beauty to repulsive hideousness.

Now let us try to identify the Man Child. Many have been the guesses that have been made. Some have sought to show

that the Man Child is Christ and His Church. A close study of the chapter will convince anyone that this could not be. The time element alone clearly offsets any such thought. If such were so, the Rapture would have to occur in the middle of Daniel's prophetic week, or just before the bursting in of the Great Tribulation. This would throw all the prophetic picture out of harmony. A careful and prayerful study will disclose the fact that the Man Child is the Lord Jesus, the coming Ruler of all nations, He who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron (Psa. 2:9). The beautiful expression "child" is used of the Lord Jesus in so many Scriptures—"Unto us a child is born" (Isa. 9:6); "Against thy child" (Acts 4:27); and also Matthew 1 and Romans 9:1-5.

Who then is the mother of this Man Child? The woman is Israel through whom our Lord came (Rom. 9:4, 5). Notice her marks of identification. She is arrayed with the glorious sun, the symbol of governmental authority—it is so in creation and in the Kingdom. Israel lost this authority to the Gentiles and her scepter passed into Gentile hands at the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, but it will eventually be restored to her again and retained through millennium days. A comparison with the patriarch Joseph's dream and this symbol is helpful. The moon is under her feet. Today Israel is under the feet of the Gentiles, she is trodden under foot. But some day the tables will be turned and a repetition of Joshua 10:24 will take place. Israel is yet to arise and shine.

The woman is seen in the agonies of childbirth. There is no friend to help her in this the deepest sorrow of a woman's life; only a hideous fiend is seen waiting to snatch the Child. No escape seems possible as in all her helplessness of agony this heartless monster awaits the birth of her Man Child.

The great question now arises, *When* did the Dragon attempt to devour the Man Child? Two great principles in prophetic truth, if kept before us, will help us to avoid

becoming confused: The first principle is that, in writing prophecy, the Holy Spirit as a rule does not confine Himself to the rigid chronological order of events. The second principle is that the Holy Spirit in prophecy does not always give in detail all the separate events.

When did the Dragon attempt to destroy the Man Child? Time and time again in the Gospel record we read of these attempts. Herod's sly efforts to learn of the Magi, the whereabouts of the Child, and then his decree that all children of a certain age be slain; the temptation of Christ in the wilderness; the storm on the Sea of Galilee; the attempts to stone Christ; the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, just to name a few. But in Heaven the Father has His eye upon His Son, and before the cruel Dragon can carry out his design of seizing the hated Man Child the almighty hand of God reaches down and the Man Child is caught up into Heaven to sit upon His Father's throne (Rev. 12:5).

But the careful reader will notice that the following verse tells us of the flight of the woman, at the beginning of the Great Tribulation. Verses 1 to 5 cover time from the birth of the Lord Jesus to His ascension; in fact, they usher us into the dawn of His millennial rule. Just as the detailed events of His earthly life are passed over, so from His ascension, now viewed in its relation to His would-be murderer, the Dragon, the detail of the great events between His reception in Heaven to the outburst of Israel's greatest hour of sorrow are passed over, and Israel in relation to her great adversary, the Dragon, is presented.

The time prophecy given here is definite and simple. The time given is figured back from our Lord's second advent. Twelve hundred and sixty days, or three and a half years, make up the last half of Daniel's prophetic weeks of years—just three and one-half years to finish the "times of the Gentiles," and then the anointing of the Most Holy.

Keeping in mind the two principles of interpretation mentioned before, one will immediately recognize that, between verses 5 and 6, an unmeasured dispensation has come in, not revealed in this chapter—this present age of grace.

The stage is now set for the greatest drama of all the ages, the tragic events that are to take place on earth in these last three and one-half years, and leading up to the return of the Man Child in advent glory. Verses 7 to 12 of chapter 12 introduce us to some of the events that will be taking place in Heaven during this period.

Michael, the great defender of the woman, Israel, now enters the arena of conflict, leading the onslaught against the Dragon and his confederate angel forces. The ultimate outcome is sure: the Dragon will lose the day and will be cast out in shameful defeat and hurled down upon the earth, and from this moment this world will have a personal Devil upon it. Whatever have been his activities on earth before, these were tender mercies compared with the atrocious deeds he will commit from this moment on. It is summed up in this twelfth chapter—Heaven is glad; the earth is sad; and the Devil is mad.

In the consciousness of his approaching doom and that his time is short, he now is determined to pour out all his malignant venom upon the helpless woman, Israel. The Man Child he cannot touch, for He is in Heaven. The Church he cannot harm, for the Church has been removed by rapture—it is safe home in Glory. The rage of Dragon wrath will be against this godly remnant of Israel's seed. In this extremity God will provide His people a refuge, a haven from the fury of this terrible storm. Israel will be safely sheltered from her deadly foe. The wilderness was Israel's home for forty years, her national life for years has been in many ways a desert one. It will not be all Israel upon whom the Tribulation blow will fall, but one-third, the godly rem-

nant that will remain loyal and true to the God of their fathers and who shall stand and witness for God in these, the darkest days ever seen on earth. The other two-thirds of Israel will turn apostate, and God will deal with them in the trumpet judgments (Zech. 13:8, 9). Into the wilderness refuge God will safely bring His people, those "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17). Now, not for forty years, but for three and one-half years, Israel's wilderness experience shall be resumed. They are now the objects of the Dragon's cruel persecution, and will find a safe retreat in the haven of God's sheltering arms. This will usher in the dawn of the Scarlet Age.

CHAPTER 16

WILL THE ROMAN EMPIRE BE REVIVED?

THE BEAST OUT OF THE SEA AND ITS BLASPHEMOUS DICTATOR

Chapter 13 of the Book of Revelation discloses a fearsome, composite Beast coming up out of the sea. The sea symbolizes the restless nations of the world, tossed to and fro by the unrestrained lawlessness and sin of the last days. To identify the Beast, let us turn to Daniel 7, where is recorded Daniel's vision of four great world-empires, typified by four wild beasts. These same empires are also seen in Daniel 2 as parts of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

The first was the Babylonian Empire, symbolized by the lion with eagle's wings (Dan. 7:4) and the golden head of the image (2:37, 38). To this empire was given the scepter as it fell from Judah's hand because of the apostasy of those days. It could never have been wrested from the grasp of God's people unless a just and sin-hating God had allowed it to come to pass. The great Babylonian Empire, with all of its magnificent wonders and cities, was not long to hold the scepter of world dominion. Its sun set on the night of Belshazzar's impious feast, when the armies of Darius took over the city of Babylon.

The second was the Medo-Persian Empire, symbolized by the bearlike beast (7:5), and the silver breast and arms of the image (2:39). It wrested the scepter from the hand of the Babylonians, and its monarchs were used by the Most

High in the restoration of Jerusalem and her Temple. This was the world-empire in which Daniel ruled, and Mordecai and Esther later played so important a part.

The third was the Greco-Macedonian Empire, symbolized by the leopard (7:6), and the belly and thighs of brass of the image (2:39), and founded by Alexander the Great, whose brilliant conquests smashed all opposing forces.

The fourth was the Roman Empire, represented by a monstrosity with iron teeth and ten horns (7:7), the iron legs and feet of the image (2:40-43).

A prayerful and impartial study of Daniel and Revelation should convince anyone that an empire, embodying characteristics of all four earlier world-empires, but resembling to the largest degree the fourth or Roman Empire, must be brought upon the prophetic scene in order to fulfill the events that lie at the time of the end. It is true that the name of the fourth empire is never mentioned, but this is equally true of the other three. The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (chap. 2) represents, in its completeness, the entire "times of the Gentiles" from start to finish. It is plain that the ten-toe part has not yet appeared, and cannot appear until the resurrection of the Roman Empire takes place. It is known that, in this confederated state of imperial unity, this empire has never yet existed. To complete the image, the ten-toe kingdom must necessarily appear before the fall of the Stone "cut out without hands" (2:34). How near we are to its future appearance it is beyond our power to know. One thing is definite and plain, and that is that this ten-toed confederated empire must one day put in its appearance before the "times of the Gentiles" will cease. When it does appear, the Stone will fall upon these feet and toes with such irresistible power that it will smash to shivers this last great imperial unity of Gentile nations. Our Lord will descend from Heaven in His glorious second advent. Falling

with unprecedented violence upon the toes of iron and clay, He will grind them to powder. Blown by the winds of God's wrath, they will pass away forever, and the most glorious Kingdom of our Lord Jesus will arise and fill the scene. As Daniel puts it: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (2:44). This is the fifth kingdom, and naturally follows the revived Roman kingdom.

It may be objected that in the last days there will not be time to build such a revived Roman Empire. This should not present any difficulty. How long did it take Alexander the Great to build his vast empire? We are told ten years. Who is Alexander compared with the Dragon, who, cast down to earth, will inspire the revival of the Roman Empire? Can we compare any mortal with this terrible being and his vast host of angels and evil spirits? A moment's thought and reflection as to the rapidly changing scientific world should show us that the age in which we live is changing rapidly. The atomic and hydrogen bombs are already making the military and naval equipment of recent years obsolete. Who can predict what the near future has in store?

The resurrected Roman Empire will be the counterpart of the kingdom that the Dragon has lost in his battle with Michael and his angels (cf. Rev. 12:3 with 13:1). Stung and angered because he has lost this kingdom of the heavens, where for vast ages he has reigned, the Devil will determine that, if he cannot have his kingdom in the heavens, he will have a duplicate on the earth. Not much is revealed about the heavenly places where Satan as "prince of the power of the air" now operates, and by principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness rules the world in religion, politics, and opposition to God. Ephesians 6 has something to say, however, about these spiritual hosts of wickedness that are today

our bitter enemies, and shows how they doggedly and determinedly oppose our progress in the things of God.

The revived Roman Empire will be the most *blasphemous* empire that the world has ever known. Upon its head are the names of blasphemy. But as low as Communism, or Fascism, or Nazism, or the nations of any age have sunk in blasphemy and godlessness, and no matter how cruel they may have been, this great Dragon Empire will exceed them all. Empires of the past will be outstripped in revolting crime and heartless savagery. The character of this empire is symbolized by wild and ferocious beasts of the jungle. The leopard, symbol of treachery and unchangeable sinfulness, springs on his unsuspecting victim from behind. The bear, symbol of brute strength and tenacity, strikes down, or tramples with its massive feet, its helpless victims. The lion, with its great teeth, crushes the bones of its victims, smashing all opposition to pieces. These natural animals know no tenderness. In the fallen state of the whole creation, they have no compassion or sense of mercy or sympathy. The symbols given plainly indicate the brute character of this sinful empire, pitiless, inhuman, savage, heartless, finding its satisfaction in atrocity and wanton cruelty, heinous and brutish, as it tramples beneath its feet the victims of that hour. This cruelty will be directed chiefly against any who dare in these days of the Great Tribulation to witness for God.

It will be the most *defiant* empire the world has ever known. It will challenge the very throne of God (Psa. 2) and of His Son. Its finest armies and all their resources will be marshaled, in its final stage, to fight the Son of God. This empire will erect a throne on earth. This throne will be the throne of Satan himself, and upon this throne Satan will set his superman, the Antichrist, who will, in bold defiance, claim homage and adoration given only to deity.

This great monarch of the resurrected Roman Empire will electrify the world when he appears, and he will be the wonder of the ages. Many will be filled with profound admiration for him and will cry out in their jubilant hour of triumph, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4.) He will challenge in bold and open defiance the Son of God. This greatest autocrat the world has ever known, this last and most terrible tyrant, the world's final and wicked dictator, will, inspired by demon frenzy, attempt to settle the greatest problem this world has ever known, the sovereignty of the world. Like tyrants of the past, he is doomed to defeat. He will meet his ignoble end in the capture and banishment that await him, and be cast alive into the lake of fire.

The revived Roman Empire will be the most *universal* empire that earth has ever known. Many well-meaning students argue over the boundaries of this coming empire. Strictly speaking, there is no doubt that the nucleus of this coming empire will be formed around the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. This was the case with all four world-kingsdoms of the past. But the chapter discloses a fact that seems to have been entirely overlooked by many prophetic students. Though its metropolis will be Rome on the Tiber, and the surrounding lands around the shores of the Great Sea will form its powerful center, this vast empire will stretch like a huge octopus embracing in its mighty tentacles all "kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (v. 7). This scarlet empire will compass the whole earth until not one land escapes its foul embrace.

The revived Roman Empire will be the most *wonderful* of all the ages. It will be the greatest masterpiece upon which man ever gazed. It will command every avenue of earthly power, science, wealth, economies, military and naval resources. This universal empire will enslave the whole

world, every brow and hand will be branded (vs. 15-17), marked for eternal retribution without freedom of any kind—religious, racial, or political.

The revived Roman Empire will be the most *scarlet* empire that the world has ever seen. The word "scarlet" can be used in many ways. It can be applied in all these ways to the resurrected Roman Empire. Scarlet is the color of sin, sin double-dyed in iniquity (Isa. 1:18). This empire will exceed all others in the enormity of wickedness and in the depths of its total depravity. Scarlet is the color of bloodshed. What a world it will be then, crimsoned and reddened by the shedding of the blood of thousands in awful blood baths. Scarlet is the color of lawlessness. It is used of Communism; it is also used of papal Rome. Scarlet will be seen even in nature itself, the heavenly orbs turning scarlet and casting their lurid shadows upon this forsaken world; the rivers, fountains, seas turning into gory red as they reflect the blood of martyrs slain because of their fidelity to the truth of God.

The one bright spot in this chapter, with all its awful forebodings, is found in the little word "given" (Rev. 13:5, 7). This great crisis is not allowed to run on forever unchecked, but is to be limited by the decree of an Almighty God. In spite of all the Devil's power and rage, its limitations are firmly fixed; beyond God's boundaries it cannot go. The One who sits upon the throne still has the scepter in His hand. This revived empire cannot appear before God's permissive time. No human power can bring it on the scene before its appointed time. The Church must first be removed. The Holy Spirit must be withdrawn. The Dragon must be in person on the earth. Its exact time on God's prophetic calendar is plainly written down by the pen of inspiration. It appears at the end of the "times of the Gentiles." The Devil cannot grasp this power until it is *given*

to him by an Almighty God, and he will be helpless to act until the hour has struck on God's prophetic clock.

It will be limited as to its duration. This amount of time is carefully specified in four different ways: in days, in months, in years, and also in the Hebrew form—"a time, times, and an half" (Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:14), or three and one half years.

Our glorious Lord will descend in irresistible power and magnificent glory with His armies of Heaven, crushing His many foes, and will establish His Kingdom that shall never be moved, a Kingdom eternal and universal, and He shall reign forever and ever. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

CHAPTER 17

THE MYSTERIOUS MARK OF THE BEAST

CAN WE KNOW WHAT IT MEANS AND WHO WILL RECEIVE IT?

In the preceding chapter, which dealt with the first part of Revelation 13, John records that he saw a fearsome Beast that we identified as the revived Roman Empire. As we continue in chapter 13, the seer beholds another Beast, this one coming up out of the earth. Much discussion has centered around these two Beasts, and many varied interpretations have been given by prophetic students. Between the two beasts, not only in this chapter but in many other references, one cannot help but note a strong similarity, a very close resemblance. It is this close similarity that has led many to claim that they are one and the same person or system represented by different symbolic characters.

Some have maintained that the first Beast is the personal Antichrist, and there can be no doubt that many of the things spoken of him, both in the Old and in the New Testament, seem to vindicate this view held by so many esteemed expositors and careful prophetic students. However, a close and careful study of the chapter and of the events related to these two Beasts and that follow their work and end has led this writer to believe that, though the first Beast is greater than the second in power and resources, nevertheless the second is the personal Antichrist, or the counterfeit Messiah. The first comes up out of the sea of the restless Gentile nations. The second comes up in the land of Pales-

tine. The first is the Roman "prince" (Dan. 9:26, 27). The second is an apostate Jew. The first is a political power, operating in the political realm. The second is a religious power, working as such in co-ordination and assisted by the resources of the first Beast to this end. The first is a false king, the second is a false prophet. The first will sit on the throne of the Caesars in the city of Rome, his metropolis. The second will sit on the throne of David, usurping our Lord's legal claim, in the city of Jerusalem. The first will work no miracles. The second Beast will. The first will be wounded. The second will bear no wounds. The first has ten horns. The second has only two horns. The first will mark no man. The second will mark every man. The first will make no image, but the second Beast will make an image of the first Beast. The first will have a time limit. The second will have none. The first has characteristics of three ferocious wild beasts of the jungle. The second has horns like a gentle lamb of the fold.

This second Beast will be the greatest counterfeit that has ever appeared on the stage of time. His greatest act of deception will be the impersonation of Jesus our Lord. He will manifest himself to Israel as their long-promised King Priest, foretold so often in their sacred Scriptures as the coming One after the order of Melchisedec. He has horns "*like*" a lamb. He is not a real lamb, but a miserable impostor. This marks him as a master deceiver who is counterfeiting the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world.

The Jews looked forward to the coming Messiah as a King Priest. This great impostor will imitate both of these offices. Behind him is the Devil who ever since man fell has sought to counterfeit all that God has ever brought into this world; every institution, no matter how high and noble, this wicked deceiver has ruined.

In this coming Scarlet Age when these two wild Beasts are operating together in their respective spheres, Satan will by these means counterfeit the blessed Trinity by bringing a false trinity, composed of himself—the Dragon, the first Beast which is the head of the scarlet empire and the second Beast, the personal Antichrist. These three will form the dreadful trinity of the Devil.

The Dragon will have in this, the personal Antichrist, the greatest mouthpiece he has ever had. The Gospel of John is very emphatic in stating that our Lord when on earth was the very mouthpiece of God His Father. This was so often asserted in the ministry of our Lord, and it was this that caused such great resentment to His enemies. Here this wicked Beast attempts to counterfeit the ministry of our blessed Lord.

In like manner this denizen of the pit outwardly appears as a lamb, while inwardly he is the wolf. Yet he has only to speak and his voice betrays his deception, and men hear his master's voice because it is the voice of the Dragon. Not only will this agent of Satan use his powers to deceive, but he will cause an image to be made such as men have never witnessed before. This will be the Devil's masterpiece; he is playing his last cards, and he can see he is to lose the game. The image will be given life. By strange and delegated power, this mysterious agent of the Dragon imparts life to the image.

There are two great things that lie on the surface of this thirteenth chapter—the dominion of the world, and the worship of Satan by all mankind. The first the Devil will produce by the rise of the revived Roman Empire. The second will be obtained through his two confederates in crime. Through the first Beast, the Dragon is universally worshiped. Through the second Beast, the first Beast is worshiped. The

convincing proof of his messiahship will be the miraculous powers that will startle all mankind, such as the calling down of fire from Heaven.

The world is the same today. Men would sooner have exhibitions of God's power in the realm of the miraculous than the exhibitions of God's matchless and sovereign grace. They would sooner have healing of the body than be healed in soul from all sin's terrible diseases. The world of the Antichrist will find millions of willing dupes just as the Devil finds them today, eager for falsehood but not for the truth, anxious for new fangled theologies but not for the old-fashioned doctrines of the Christian faith.

The Antichrist will cause a mark to be branded on every brow or on every right hand. Those who will not conform to this cruel edict will not be allowed to buy or sell or trade in any way. This mark of the Beast has perhaps been the subject of more speculation than any other subject of the Bible. There are many things about this mark that are not revealed, but sufficient information is given to satisfy our need, without the senseless speculation or the going beyond what is written.

It will be a mark of *idolatry*. The curse of all ages has been idolatry. In every land it is in the ascendancy. Most heathen religions are essentially Devil worship, and even modern cults and isms have openly worshiped the Dragon.

It will be a mark of *deception*. The miracles as performed by the Antichrist will have as their object, not the good of mankind, not the betterment of society, not the advancement of truth, but the wicked deceitfulness of sin, the absolute ruin of man, and the total perdition of the whole human race.

It will be the mark of *ownership*. Men will yield their bodies, souls, and spirits to the Devil. Surrendering the useful hand, the noble brow, they will lay their all on the Dragon's altar, yielding to him.

It will be the mark of *religion*. Man is constituted a religious being. Find him wherever you will, he worships some being he calls god. The Devil knows man's weakness, and he is going to make use of this for his own sinful purposes. This will be his supreme opportunity, and he will introduce a system by which he eventually will entrap the whole world into one great religious camp in which every heart adores him as its god.

It will be the mark of *compulsion*. Under the threat of boycott and death, without a vote, without a choice, no longer treated as a moral agent, but as slaves of this great Dragon system, men will have no alternative than meekly to submit. To do otherwise will be fatal.

It will be the mark of *commercial dealing*. Commercialism is the god of the human heart. Here no card of membership need be shown, no awkward system of colored cards, no laborious punching of tickets. All the victim has to do to satisfy the merchant is to show his hand or his brow, and the coveted goods belong to him. Regimentation here will be perfected.

It will be a mark of *defiance of God*. The cartoons of Russian Communism depicted a young boy shaking his fist in the face of God Almighty. Now in these days it will not be done in one land, but in all lands. Everywhere there exists this blatant spirit, arrogant, challenging, and hurling defiance against a loving God who gave His only Son for all mankind.

It will be a *mark of mystery*. No one yet has been able to tell what it is, and no one will until that fatal hour when this mark is in operation. Multitudes of teachers have made guesses bringing discredit upon prophetic truth. What this mark is, the Holy Spirit has not fully revealed. We can leave it with God who, in His infinite wisdom, states that it is a mystery. When the Beast is operating in Palestine and every-

thing is in full swing, the problem will be solved and the mystery will be plain.

It will be a mark of *imperfection*. Seven is the number of perfection. Six is the number of imperfection, the number of labor (Gen. 1). These three sixes are the numerals of the Dragon, symbols that plainly confess the impotency of puny man.

It will be the mark of *Satan*. God marks His own servants in chapter 7. He is always ahead of the Devil. Satan now imprints on all the human race his diabolical mark. This is the insignia of perdition, the brand of their consignment to the lake of fire (chap. 14:10, 11). Not one body marked by this satanic mark but will be doomed, damned, and bound for the fires of retribution which is the lake of fire, where, in conscious suffering forever and forever they shall reap the due reward of their deeds.

It will be the mark of *destiny*. Heaven and its angel forces will publicly warn every man of the terrible consequences incurred in receiving this mark of alignment with this sworn and open enemy of Almighty God. Those who knowingly and defiantly receive the mark must perish in the lake of fire. To hear these solemn warnings from the highest Heaven and then to go to the branding stations of the Antichrist is to commit the sin of presumption, a sin which under law or under grace finds no forgiveness in this world or the world to come (Heb. 10:26-31).

It will be a *universal* mark. No class will be exempt—no race, no creed, no faith, no nation or land. It will embrace the whole of mankind. One universal mark for one unified world. The Bible begins with a marked man, and it finishes with a world of marked men.

How near are we to this fatal hour of this world crisis? No human being can tell. The world is ready to receive with open arms the pretender to David's throne. The Jew

is ready. Israel's modern leaders have already announced their willingness to receive any man who will free the Holy Land of her enemies. Palestine will be ready when the hour has struck on the clock of God's prophetic program. She is before the eyes of the whole world as never before. The political stage is fast being set. The religious world is ready. The social world is ready, degenerating more and more each day with its incoming tides of immorality, orgies of frightful indecencies, its breakdown of home life and disobedience to parents, its cheap marriages, and its easy divorces.

We do not know how near this world tragedy may be, but great comfort is found in the Epistle which deals with this "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2). Before he can appear, this Epistle makes it clear that the Church must be raptured. The Hinderer—the blessed Holy Spirit—must be taken out of the way before the falling away can blossom forth and consummate in the appearance of the two archfiends, the two Beasts of Revelation 13. The crises will come when the covenant is broken and the Man of Sin, throwing off all his deceptions, dares to enthrone himself in the holy of holies and with open defiance of the sovereign Ruler of this universe. This act of the impostor will start rolling the wheels of the Great Tribulation, a period of three and a half years of unparalleled suffering and sorrow. This will be the "time of Jacob's trouble," the "abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15).

CHAPTER 18

THE SEVEN VIALS OF GOD'S WRATH

WILL THEY DRIVE MEN TO REPENTANCE?

In chapter 15 of Revelation, we find that the center of activity in Heaven has changed from the throne, where it was in chapter 4, to the Temple, from which the seven angels are soon to emerge with their vials of God's wrath. The Temple on earth has been corrupted by the "abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15). The Temple in Heaven remains unchanged in its holy character, just as God's throne stands unchanged, immovable, stable, and steadfast. The holiness of God must always assert itself when sin attempts to wrest the scepter of righteousness from His almighty hand.

That holy Temple is filled with smoke. The wrath of the fires of God's holiness has closed those Temple doors against all access. Mercy has forsaken this scene. Grace has fulfilled her mission. God now is unapproachable. God is no longer available to be interviewed; the anger of a thrice holy God must burn in righteous judgment. "Terrible," cries the atheist. "Yes, it is terrible," answers the Christian, who must once more remind the atheist that this same God, whose hands sin has now forced to act in the crisis of this dread hour, is the God of Calvary.

There are those today who delight to cavil at the idea of the punishment of sinners at the hand of God. Let them who believe in their false toleration study this chapter carefully. Here is the united testimony of the martyrs (vs. 3, 4).

Surely they must know the character of God. They ascribe to God a lovely tribute to His justness saying, "Who shall not fear thee, and glorify thy name?" Only the blind atheist or opinionated Modernist, or lawless rebel, held fast by his passions in abject slavery, would refuse to bow at this holy shrine of the righteous execution of God's wrath, when, as the moral governor of His own universe, He must punish sinners that violate His holy laws.

The plagues of chapter 16 are the seven last plagues; no more will follow. One cannot help, when reading this chapter, thinking of Israel in the land of Egypt. There is a close resemblance between the plagues of Egypt and the plagues of this chapter. Sent on their mission of death, blood, war, and pestilence, the seven angelic heralds of destruction speed from the Temple to avenge the blood of the martyrs. One of the four living creatures gives into their hands the seven dreadful bowls, or golden vials, filled to the brim with the burning wrath of an angry God, and a great voice is heard commanding them to go. The vials are seven, which tells of completeness. The vials are golden, which reveals the majesty and sovereignty of God. They are full; the contents are given without stint or limit. They are filled with wrath, not grace or mercy. Wrath to the uttermost is poured out. The earth is their destination; this world is to be the theater of their operation. The heavenly places have all been cleared, but the earth is still holding out as a mighty stronghold in rebellion and revolt.

The first vial is poured out, and the earth becomes a world of Jobs. The corruption within now comes out. The corruption of human hearts is now manifested. In all its loathsomeness, the putrid matter of sinful natures now reveals itself in rotting corruption (Isa. 1:6). Men have allowed themselves to be marked for judgment by receiving the mark of the Beast. How the marks of a fallen moral nature appear

in loathsome, repulsive, disgusting, painful, bleeding, itching sores!

The second vial is poured out, and the sea becomes as the blood of a dead man. Ask the undertaker what dead men's blood is like; ask the soldier and sailor boys to describe it. Some Bible students see here the symbols of great naval battles and disasters of colossal magnitude. A closer study would seem to involve far more. The vial has far more outreaching consequences as every living soul in the sea dies. No soul can live in these foul, stagnant bloody waters. The vast bodies of water are changed to vast bodies of corruption and death—blood to swim in, to bathe in, to drink. Terrible beyond all description. The refreshing sea breezes are gone, the healthy and invigorating conditions are gone.

The third vial is poured out, and the horrid specter of blood grows to greater proportions. Now rivers and fountains are affected. Streams of blood meet the eye everywhere. Go to your faucet—you can get only blood. Go to the spring—only flowing blood. The pump where the sparkling water used to delight the soul and quench the thirst now yields only dirty, filthy blood. This appalling calamity will bring horrors to this world far more terrible than the sons of men have ever yet experienced.

Before the next vial is poured out, a wondrous confession from the altar voices breaks forth. A twofold confession is heard, justifying our Creator for these outpourings of His wrath. The glorious angels are always quick to sense the justice of God's actions. It is only those whose eyes are blinded by Satan who slander God for enforcing His laws of righteousness.

The fourth angel now pours out his dreadful bowl of wrath. Now the glorious sun, the source of nature's blessing, whose sunshine makes glad the hearts of men, turns against the enemies of God and His Christ and the murderers of the

holy martyrs. In the providences of our beneficent Creator, He has limited by the firmament the vast resources of this great center of heat. The heat and energy invested since creation in this glorious sun are allowed to reach us only for good, some ninety-three millions of miles away. Its almost infinite resources of heat and ultraviolet light have been controlled by the atmosphere to keep this globe from burning up. Here in this vial judgment these restraints are removed, and men are scorched by the intense heat. They now get a foretaste of what the lake of fire will be like.

The fifth angel now pours his vial upon the throne of the Beast, and his kingdom is plunged in terrible darkness. All light is withdrawn. God is bearding the lion in his den. One must understand that there is one sense in which these plagues are not like the plagues that fell on ancient Egypt. In Egypt's case, each plague was terminated by the mercy of God. Here each plague runs on its dreadful course without stop, adding more destruction and sorrow as time goes on. Man's first installment of the lake of fire is given in the fourth vial, his second is given in the fifth vial. Seemingly this reaches the summit of the endurance of man, and pain of the most excruciating kind is meted out to those who suffer under this fifth vial. Terrible though these pains may be, and hideous though their sores may be, they do not drive men to repentance, but rather to blasphemy and impenitence. How helpless the Beast will be to afford relief to those who are his victims! In spite of all his vaunted power, his subjects can only gnaw their tongues for pain, and grope their way in a darkness far greater than that which befell ancient Egypt.

The sixth angel pours out his vial upon the great River Euphrates, and this great river is dried up so that the barriers might be removed, for the path to Armageddon must be cleared. Soon the world's greatest battle is to be staged in

the land of Palestine. Here we see the godward side of this titanic struggle. How could such a terrible war be staged when man is supposed to be getting more enlightened, more loving, and emerging into a common brotherhood of nations? Here the veil is removed.

Out of the mouths of the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet now come three unclean spirits. These spirits resemble frogs. The frog is a fitting picture of these filthy, unclean demons. The frog breeds its young in the filth and mire of the slime and slush of the stagnant pond, so these demons are happy in moral filth and shame. These spirits are deceptive. They are out to allure the whole world, and entice all mankind to enter the trap of the cruel, heartless Dragon. They will work miracles, and cleverly seduce their willing victims by wonderful signs, which the human heart craves to behold.

This sixth vial will be poured out to bring about four things:

1. God's object is to crush the Beast and his Dragon-controlled empire. This judgment will paralyze his mighty power, and, for the time being, bring a respite to the harassed godly remnant.

2. All hindrances are removed to allow the kings from the East to make their advance upon the land of Palestine for the battle of Armageddon.

3. To contest the sovereignty of the world. Soon Christ, the promised Messiah, is to come to reign, and the Devil is determined to contest it.

4. To test the power of God and the power of Satan. Soon the mighty power of Satan, which has wrecked the purposes of God and caused such havoc to mankind, will be forever broken, and the great mystery of evil will be at an end.

The Devil and all his hosts of evil, combined with the armed forces of men, will be gathered to fight it out with

Almighty God. How helpless they will be, in spite of all their modern implements of warfare! How useless their artillery will be when the Almighty releases the powers of nature against man! How helpless when the heavens open and the glorious Rider on the white horse (Rev. 19), the invincible warrior of Armageddon, robed in dreadful crimson, descends to accept the arrogant challenge!

The seventh angel now pours out his dreadful vial upon the capital city of the Beast, and it will lie in ruins. The throne of God has spoken in its message of violent wrath, and the earth is shaken. All history fails to record such an earthquake for violence. Every obstacle is smashed; all is tottering in ruins. The cities of earth fall; the end has come. The power of demons and Satan is tottering.

CHAPTER 19

THE COMING FEDERATION OF RELIGIONS

THE WOMAN IN SCARLET WHO RIDES THE BEAST

The seer, in chapters 17 and 18 of Revelation, records what was revealed to him concerning the foulest religious system the world will ever know—the Scarlet Woman. You will notice it is not the *rise* of the Scarlet Woman that is in view, but the *judgment* of the woman. Who is this wicked woman, and where did she originate?

In reading the Book of Revelation, there is a principle that is often overlooked. Events recorded do not always follow each other in consecutive order. Many run parallel and contemporaneously. If this is not kept in mind when studying this portion of God's Word, confusion will result. You may have noticed that several times we have been led right up to the second coming of the Lord Jesus, then later on, earlier events along this same path come into view.

We must turn back to the letters to the seven churches of Asia to find the origin of the Scarlet Woman. In chapter 7 of this volume we saw something of the origin of this foul ecclesiastical system in the Church in Thyatira. This system, born in the early centuries, and continuing on down through the years, comes to its full bloom and manifestation after the true Church has been raptured.

With this foul papal system, apostate Protestantism, the beginnings of which are foreshadowed in the Church in Sardis, will combine as one. This Protestantism will not

be the virile kind born at the Diet of Spires in the sixteenth century, but an apostate form, vicious, blasphemous, dead. We can see some of this taking form before our eyes today. Toleration is the slogan of the hour. Doctrine must be thrown to the winds, and the Bible placed where it will never bother anyone.

After the true Church typified by Philadelphia has gone, called up into the Glory, papal Rome, apostate Protestantism, and the lukewarm professors of Laodicea will form this federation of religions. The Scripture labels this as "the scarlet woman." It will no longer be known as Rome, although she will form the nucleus of this vast universal system. The angel gives us the name that will identify this woman, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth" (Rev. 17:5).

This Scarlet Woman is a corrupt woman. Her names describe her as the most corrupt system the world has ever known. She emerges from the brothel of the Dragon. The sinners of pagan history never sank to the moral depth and moral mire to which this woman sinks. Never before has she been equaled in depravity. Adultery is usually understood to mean an act of unfaithfulness between two married persons. Fornication is understood to mean the sin of those who have never pledged themselves by the holy bond of matrimony. This woman is guilty of this latter sin because she professes and will insist that she is the true Church of Jesus Christ or the Bride of Christ, and yet she openly, and without any sense of shame, embraces the bosom of the Dragon.

The great kings of earth are the clients and the victims of the pretentious claims of this Scarlet Woman. Just as, before the Reformation, the kings of popish countries, such as Charles IX of France and Philip of Spain, had to bow the knee before Roman popes or lose their kingdoms, so this

Scarlet Woman of the future will bring under her control the rulers of earth as her willing vassals. Her position will be one of great power. In verse 1 the Scarlet Woman sits upon many waters. This speaks of her universal sway. Not one land will escape her seductive snare. She will be a confederated amalgamation of the world religions.

She sits upon the Beast. This great Dragon Empire with its imperial head will become her willing consort, and will support her vain and pompous claims, enforce all her decrees, and put to death by its civil power all who dare to challenge her spurious claims. Supported morally, financially, and religiously, Church and State wedded together will for a short time ride on prosperously until the ax of divine judgment falls.

The true Church of the New Testament is seen in her proper place of subjection to her Lord. She recognizes Christ as her Head and recognizes His authority. But this foul Jezebel of the future will ride the Beast, holding the reins in her filthy hands and guiding it wherever she desires it to go. She sits upon the seven mountains (v. 9). Her metropolis will be the seven-hilled city of Rome, on the River Tiber. From this great historical city she will enforce her diabolical edicts and hurl her anathemas at all who dare to challenge her impious claims or question her right to be recognized as the true and only Church of Jesus Christ. From this great world's center she will radio her false claims and will drench the world with martyr blood, ruthlessly putting to death anyone who rises to oppose her Dragon demands.

This Scarlet Woman is a mother. She has given birth to many children, but what terrible children! She is the "mother of harlots," the embodiment of all the false religions. She is also a drunken mother, drunken not with liquor but with blood. Swaying and swaggering, she rides the Scarlet Empire to her eternal doom. She will be the greatest mur-

deress of all time. Few will escape her clutches. Not only so, but she has made drunk the whole world (v. 2), under the baneful influence of the dreadful wine of her fornication.

This woman is robed in scarlet, and it is a scarlet she has received of the Dragon. Scarlet here speaks of earthly sovereignty that rightfully belongs to our Lord Jesus. Foul as sin can make her within, her heart like the leopard, full of treachery, nevertheless without she is gloriously arrayed. Today her forerunner, papal Rome, robs Christ to pay Mary. She steals the honor and glory that belong to Christ Jesus our blessed Lord. She willfully misrepresents His grace and tenderness, and lavishes all its worship upon the Madonna, which is a pagan idol counterfeiting the true mother of Jesus, who commanded all to obey her Son at the wedding feast of Cana (John 2:5). The papal system today is reeking with shame, and opposes the light of the Bible wherever it is allowed to do it. Impurity and nameless immoralities, gambling, drunkenness, idolatry, commercialism are all in her program. In many lands she persecutes today those who dare preach or distribute the Word of God. But, cruel and filthy as Rome is today, when joined in these coming days by a Protestantism which already today is racing down the hill of apostasy, she will find sweet companionship.

CHAPTER 20

THE DOOM OF THE SCARLET WOMAN

WEeping ON EARTH AND JOY IN HEAVEN

The preceding chapter described the Scarlet Woman of Revelation 17 and the Beast through whom she will exercise her universal religious sway. It was seen that she represents the last great federation of religions, including Rome, every false cult, and apostate Protestantism joined together, and claiming to be the true Church and ruthlessly putting to death all who resist her claims.

But what of the bold and fearless Protestantism of the Reformation, what has become of it today? Official Protestantism today is like Samson asleep on the lap of wicked Delilah. Some day, if it ever awakens, it will find itself blind and grinding in the prison house of its enemies, shorn of its mighty power that it once had for God. What is the reason for this state of Protestantism? It is because Protestantism has wavered while Rome never changes. She has undermined the Bible as the Word of God. She has changed the truth of God into a lie (Rom. 1:25). She has labeled as fable every historical fact given in Holy Scripture, misrepresented the God of the Old Testament as a tribal deity and the great truth of the atonement as a "slaughterhouse religion." She has denied the reality of the resurrection of the Son of God, and she has rejected practically every claim the Bible makes as to its inspiration, authenticity, and infallibility. Rome, though opposed to the reading and distribution of the Bible, has yet not gone to this length in apostasy.

Protestantism today encourages divorce. She permits it, sanctions it, sanctifies it, and is thus divided on the sanctity of marriage. Study her decrees on marriage. Her ministers will marry divorced persons without exercise of conscience. Rome is the foe of divorce, and in spite of her moral corruption, champions the sanctity of the married state, and is outspoken against divorce (study 1 Cor. 7).

Protestantism denies the miraculous. Even the miracles of the Son of God are labeled folklore, or are explained away in language that does not make sense. She is self-satisfied and not Christ-satisfied. She is Laodicean in her attitude to the Son of God. She is satisfied with her dead creeds, dogmas, denominationalism. Self-righteousness instead of the righteousness of Christ is her boast. Christ is shut outside her doors, and, although she is bankrupt and poverty-stricken, she refuses His vast riches. She is uncertain in her message and is lost in the fog of speculation and theory—as a consequence it is a source of doubt. She feels no shame when its ministers boldly deny the fact of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ our Lord, the fact of His deity, His sinlessness, and the victorious atonement and resurrection of the Son of God.

But this drunken debauchee, reeling and swaying in her foul impurity as she rides the Beast, this whore from the brothel of the Dragon is not to reign forever. Her glory is but for a little time, and then she is to fall and rise no more. Her glory and wealth become the cause for jealousy cruel as the grave. The ten federated kings who have supported her will eye her with jealousy and will conspire to destroy her (Rev. 17:16). Her charms will have lost their power, her claims will be found to be spurious, and hatred burns in their hearts against her. Their eyes at last will be opened and they will throw off her yoke. Shocked by her false pretensions they, in utter disgust, will turn in rage upon her, and pull her to pieces and eat her flesh. They will destroy

this foul system, burn her religious vestments, strip her naked of her glory, and the Scarlet Woman will be no more. An Almighty Sovereign Ruler has been looking on, and He is once again using the broom of destruction as He puts in these monarchs' hearts a burning passion to do His will. "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will" (Rev. 17:17).

In chapter 17, the destruction of the Scarlet Woman is viewed from the *human* side, i.e., the kings are used by God to dethrone and destroy her. The calm, eternal decrees of a thrice holy God come to pass as He uses human agents to fulfill His will. In chapter 18, her doom and destruction are viewed from the *Godward* side. Heaven now is in action, angels and voices make plain the heavenly attitude toward this once glorious queen. Into a dark world a dazzling angel descends, his glorious being illuminating the earth, and his great power is made known. His voice is heard announcing the news, "Babylon the great is fallen" (18:2). Lying in desolation and ruins, her depravity will be revealed. Heaven is concerned about any remnant that may have believed since the true Church was caught up, and God's people are commanded to "come out of her."

While this final federated system has not yet materialized, nevertheless there seems to be good reason to believe that certain elements now exist which some day will join together and make the Scarlet Woman. Let the people of God today consider this and look to the Holy Spirit to keep them free from any link with apostasy and to lead them to gather to no other name than the name of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 6:14-17).

Three great lamentations are heard in Revelation 18—lamentations of kings, merchants, and mariners. Kings who shared in the fornication of the Scarlet Woman will weep. Yet for the pure and undefiled Son of God no lamentation

of the world was heard. Merchants will weep because their source of gain is destroyed. Mariners will wail and cry, for a great center of commercialism has perished, and their source of revenue is cut off.

While sorrow and tears will fill this dark world, far above, in heavenly light, all are rejoicing (Rev. 18:20-24). Justice again has ascended the throne and championed the right. Apostles, prophets, martyrs, saints, elders, and living creatures will rejoice. The fountainhead of martyrdom has at last been judged. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord" (Judges 5:31).

CHAPTER 21

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

WHEN THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS APPEARS, TO
DEAL WITH THE ARMIES OF THE BEAST

Chapter 20 closed with the lamentation of the kings and merchants and mariners of earth, and the rejoicing of the heavenly host, in Revelation 18 and 19, because the Scarlet Woman, Babylon the Great, the final federation of religions has been destroyed.

Flushed with their victory over the Scarlet Woman and tired of the petty jealousies constantly cropping up between them, the ten federated kings of the empire of the Beast have at last arrived at perfect unity of purpose, and that great purpose is to marshal their armies to engage in the dreadful battle, the nightmare of all statesmen in every age, the Battle of Armageddon. On earth the Beast has no rival or challenger, yet he knows that as long as the Man Child lives in Heaven his kingdom is not safe. So in demon fury, inspired by the Dragon, the Beast now sets the stage for the final showdown on the historic battlefield of Armageddon. Here the tremendous issues will be forever settled.

The amazing reason for the battle is stated in bold and unmistakable words: it is to be a war against the Lamb (Rev. 17:14). By human reasoning one would think that it would be the cruel, hateful Dragon that men would want to destroy, the Dragon who has always caused the heartaches, the sorrows, and bloodshed. But, wonder of all wonders, it is not

this malicious fiend who is the object of man's hate and who arouses men to the fierce conflict, but the innocent, spotless Lamb of Calvary, who gave Himself in death because of His great love for them. It may be argued that such a thing is impossible; that men are too highly educated today ever to conceive of such a cruel thought; that progress and culture make it incredible that such a colossal tragedy as this could ever occur. The explanation is found in Revelation 16:12-16. Behind the scenes demons are intensely active. The demons are seductive, sly, and vicious; their great ambition for ages has been the destruction of the hated Nazarene. They will leave no stone unturned to carry out the Dragon's diabolical schemes and the great goal of all his dark and cruel designs—the destruction of the Man Child.

The sixteenth chapter of Revelation reveals another side of this coming drama of the Scarlet Age. It shows why the world is rushing so madly down the highway of blood shedding toward Armageddon. The reason stated is that the holiness of God has been outraged, and from the heavenly Temple seven angels are commissioned to go forth and pour out their bowls of wrath upon a world held in the chains of the hateful Dragon. An outraged Heaven has now made the earth the object of judgment.

The plagues poured out from the bowls, or vials, of God's righteous wrath are somewhat similar to the plagues poured out upon ancient Egypt. They differ in the order in which they come, and they are more intense. Each plague of Egypt ceased by the intercession of Moses before the next began. Here there is no cessation. They continue because there is no intercessor to plead.

Men suffer from dreadful sores, drinking water like dead men's blood; are scorched with the intense heat of the sun; and, finally, to add to their horrible suffering, are plunged into the midnight pall of darkness. All the lights of the

heavens and of earth have gone out, and the greatest blackout of all history now becomes a dread reality. In that darkness men gnaw their parched tongues for pain. The great Euphrates River dries up. All natural barriers are removed from the path of the kings from the East to Armageddon.

Three unclean spirits now make their appearance (Rev. 16:13, 14). They issue out of the mouths of the counterfeit trinity of evil, the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet. They resemble frogs, Scriptural symbols of evil, filth, and uncleanness.

These evil spirits will deceive the great monarchs of earth and their message will be, "On to Armageddon." They are to lead the whole world in daring and defiant rebellion against the God of Heaven.

Under demon influence the monarchs of earth will plan their attack: all the finest machinery of modern warfare will be assembled, all the latest scientific instruments, all the most deadly achievements of science will be utilized for this dastardly attack of the hordes of demons combined with the mightiest armies the world has ever seen. They are on the march to Armageddon. This place is known as the Valley of Jezreel in the northern part of Palestine. It is sometimes spoken of as the Plain of Esdraelon.

We now turn our eyes to Heaven above. Will the challenge of the marshaled armies of earth under the leadership of the Beast go unheeded? Will the Almighty answer this highhanded defiance? The scene that takes place in Heaven, while these armies are massing on the battlefield of Armageddon, is described in Psalm 2. God gazes down on man's puny attempt to challenge the Man Child. While on earth the heathen rage, while the federated kings of the earth have assembled their forces to war against the Man Child, while they are saying, "Let us cast away their cords from us," Almighty God is calmly watching as He sits on Heaven's

throne. He laughs as He views all this preparation of the Devil and all his allies. He accepts the challenge of the laughty Beast. He breaks the silence of the ages.

As the challenge is accepted, the mighty forces of Heaven come into action. The sun is veiled, and over the battlefield of Armageddon the dreadful pall of midnight darkness falls, the moon refuses to give her light, and the earth is plunged into darkness terrible beyond description. The stars of Heaven fall, and the powers of the heavens are shaken (Matt. 24:29). Suddenly the darkness is rent and Heaven is opened and the Man Child is seen descending. "Lo! He comes, with clouds descending, once for favored sinners slain. Thousand thousand saints attending swell the triumph of His train."

Now the opposing armies meet, now the battle is on. The Beast is taken. The False Prophet is captured, these two high-handed tyrants are no match for the Scarlet Warrior. They are bound hand and foot and cast alive into the lake of fire that burns forever and ever. These partners in crime are partners in eternal punishment. What has become of their magnificent armies? One word is used to described their fate—"slain" (Rev. 19:21). The Scarlet Warrior has only to speak the word, and countless numbers fall down in death. They become food to fatten the fowls of heaven. What an end to the pride of the nations, to the amassed armies of the world, to the millions of the Dragon's soldiers, to captains, generals, kings.

The Devil, the Dragon, this impersonation of rebellion and senseless hate and heartless cruelty is now arrested and fettered for one thousand years, and the mystery of evil is finished.

Such will be the ending of the Scarlet Age with the rod of iron still in the hand of the Man Child. The Day of Christ has at last come, and all creation peals forth her

jubilee songs. The mountains break forth into singing, the hills clap their hands for joy. For this blessed day the world is waiting, the whole realm of creation is groaning, the Bride of the Lamb is yearning, and everyone who loves His name is praying, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly."

CHAPTER 22

THE FIVE CROWNS OF BELIEVERS

WHO WILL RECEIVE THEM AND WHEN THEY WILL BE AWARDED

Four great judgments are mentioned in the Bible, and because of their greatness they are often referred to as major judgments. The first is the *Judgment of the Cross* (John 12:31). Sin and the world were here judged, and Christ was the one who became the sacrifice making this judgment possible. Sin, that horrible, disturbing element of the universe, its detestable root and fruit, root and branch, at the cross was judged once and for all.

This judgment was final. No second judgment can ever occur for those whose sins were borne by their Surety upon that accursed tree. It is this that completely and eternally abolishes future judgment for those who trust in the Lord Jesus. God can never demand a second payment from those who trust His Son as Saviour. He has already done the full exacting at the place called Calvary. The pardon is the thrust in our hands and the receipt, "Paid in full," written with the blood of the cross, is ours.

There is now no judgment for me, for I am in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). My sins are gone, the iron chains of sinful guilt are broken, and my soul is free. Thus the cross becomes the basis of justification and of all our blessings, because Christ suffered there, the just for the unjust, and as a vicarious substitute died in my room and stead. Just as on the

scapegoat the sins of Israel were laid (Lev. 16), so God took my sins and laid them on Christ Jesus. He bore them away to the land of absolute forgetfulness, so they are now no longer on me and no longer on Him. They are gone forever, cast as heavy stones into the sea of God's forgetfulness, swallowed up, never to be seen again.

This judgment is universal in scope. It covers every being of Adam's race, not that all *will* be saved, but all *can* be saved through the merits of our Saviour's death. This is the great message of the Gospel—none need perish, none need be lost, none need be banished to a lost eternity. There is infinite value in that judgment, so that not a single soul need ever feel the pangs of hell. Believe the Gospel, and this great work of grace becomes yours. Reject it, and it will add eternal woes to your Christ-rejecting soul.

The second major judgment is the *Judgment Seat of Christ*, the Bema, the place where rewards are to be meted out to the stewards of Christ. It has nothing to do with the question of eternal life. That question has been forever closed at Calvary, and it will never be opened up again. The judgment at the judgment seat of Christ will take place in Heaven after the Church has been raptured. Here we shall be searched through and through and turned inside out, our life's work since we found the Saviour will be examined in the dazzling searchlight of His presence.

Though eternally saved by sovereign grace, it will be necessary that our works be judged so that we can enter our eternal inheritance in the full enjoyment of our Lord. There the misunderstandings of our earthly life will be righted. Many of God's children have left this scene and have gone home to Glory, leaving unsettled things that were done in the flesh. The judgment seat of Christ will be the clearing-house, and we shall have to give an account for the wrongs committed and a reckoning for those things that God has

entrusted to our care. Some of these will be our time, our gifts, our money, our bodies, our sacred trust of the Gospel (1 Tim. 1:11), and many other responsibilities.

It will include the question of our work done since we were saved by grace. It will not be a question of the eternal security of our souls, for we are now as secure as if we were already in Heaven. It will be the testing by fire of all the work done in service down here.

There will be beautiful and magnificent rewards, if the work done on earth merits them. Among these rewards are glittering crowns of enduring glory. These crowns are at least five in number:

The *crown of life* is the martyr's crown (Rev. 2:10). Men like Stephen, James, Paul, Jerome, Huss, Tyndale, and many more will be crowned at the judgment seat with this lovely crown. Our Lord, knowing the cruel martyrdoms that were to come after He had left this scene, promised this crown of life to those who, rather than deny Him, suffer cruelty and death. He requires not brilliancy, sparkling eloquence, marvelous oratory, but a faithful, loyal heart, which, in the moment of testing, chooses death rather than deny the Lord that bought it.

The *crown of rejoicing* is the soul-winner's crown (1 Thess. 2:19). Paul had given his all for Christ's sake and for a perishing world. We might have asked this wonderful man of God, "Well, Paul, what are you going to get out of all your labor at Thessalonica? What will your investment bring you?" His reply is, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thess. 2:19). These poor idolaters won to Christ by Paul are to become the revenue with good interest in that glorious morning when Christ comes for the soul-winner of Tarsus. Yes, every soul-

winner will be remembered at the Lord's coming, they will not be forgotten at the Bema.

There is a *crown of glory* (1 Pet. 5:4). This crown is for the shepherds who faithfully tend God's flock, those who tenderly and lovingly feed the people of God, watching and guarding them, leading and defending them against the dangers of the enemies of the flock of God. This is no easy matter. Today, as in past ages, many of the Lord's dear people are hard to lead. They fail to see that leadership has been God's way of dealing in every age. Leadership is not lordship, as many fail to see. There is a vital difference. God has given leaders to His people, and the Holy Spirit has endowed men with the qualities and gift of leading the people of God. The Word of God teaches rule and godly order and discipline among the gatherings of His children. The sheep are not the shepherds, and many times we are enjoined to obey those who have the rule over us. To disobey these plain commands brings responsibility and judgment. While all believers are priests, all are not fitted or experienced to rule the people of God (Heb. 13:7, 17). For the heartaches and sleepless nights, for the numerous sorrows entailed in this holy charge, the Great Shepherd of the sheep will abundantly reward the shepherds who have been faithful to their trust. Their brows will be crowned with crowns of glory which fadeth not away.

There will be a *crown of life* for those who endure temptation (Jas. 1:12), those who, like Job, have gone through the refiner's fire, when the Great Refiner places them in the crucible of suffering, and the scorching fires of affliction melt their souls, while with skillful but loving hand He skims off the scum and dross from the melted gold, leaving only the pure and refined precious metal. Trial and testing are never pleasant, but when Christ Jesus sits on the judgment seat, we shall see the result and the reward in the crown of

life. Let us take heart, then, in heart-breaking trials, when heart and soul cry out for the living God. Some day we shall understand why the temptation was allowed to come, and rejoice in knowing that it gave us the opportunity patiently to endure and to obtain this glorious crown of life.

There will be a *crown of righteousness* (2 Tim. 4:8). This is to be bestowed upon all those who love His appearing. It is said that Kaiser William II of Germany, when asked if he would like Jesus Christ to come, said, "No!" Asked the reason why, he replied, "It would spoil all my plans." It was not long after this that his plans plunged the world in terrible bloodshed and tears. Would it interfere with your plans? Do *you* love His appearing? For every faithful heart that lovingly looks forward to His appearing, there awaits the crown of righteousness. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

There is an *incorruptible crown* (1 Cor. 9:25). This is for those who win the heavenly race. To win that race, self must be conquered. The flesh must be mastered. The race must be won. There is no cutting corners, no ignoring the rules of the race course. This demands self-control, temperance in all things, soberness of mind, and a stripping of all that hinders us—every weight, every unnecessary encumbrance—our vision must be fixed on the "author and finisher of our faith."

CHAPTER 23

THE JUDGMENT OF THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

THE AWFUL DESTINY THAT AWAITS THOSE WHO DIE IN THEIR SINS

The third major judgment is known as the *Judgment of the Gentile nations* (Matt. 25:31-46). In the Olivet discourse, our Lord was scanning the coming centuries and foretelling the great events that would occur when He comes in advent glory.

The subjects of this judgment are mentioned. They are not individuals; no resurrection to damnation has yet taken place. They are nations. The Son of man will bring them all together in this coming day, and, one by one, they will be separated until two great companies are formed—sheep and goats—the right hand, the place of blessing and approval; the left hand, the place of disapproval and cursing.

The judge here is Jesus Christ as the Son of man. As Son of man it is His sole prerogative to judge the earth (John 5:27; Psa. 8). Trace the rights and privileges that are His by this human title. Because of this He is Israel's Messiah. Because of this He has the right to rule over all the earth. An angel's hand cannot wield earth's scepter but only the hand of the Son of man (Heb. 2).

The basis of judgment is given—how the nations have treated His brethren, not His Church. The Church will have been far removed before this. Who then are these brethren? They are the Jewish remnant who go through the seventieth prophetic week of Daniel's prophecy (Rev. 7), and,

depending on how the Gentile nations existing in those days treat these faithful Jews of this godly remnant, judgment will be meted out. They will be God's witnesses in an abandoned world, and woe betide any who inflict persecution upon them.

The reward is named first. It is given in the language of blessing, the language of welcome, "Come." They are blessed by the Father. God takes notice of how men treat His covenant people, "I will bless them that bless thee." It is the language of reward. Theirs is the Kingdom. They are to inherit it.

The fourth major judgment will be the *Judgment of the Great White Throne* (Rev. 20). "I saw a great white throne." John once stood on Calvary and his gaze was riveted on a cross, reddened with blood. The same person whose form was impaled on that Roman gibbet, John saw sitting as the supreme Judge on this great white throne. He is no longer meek and lowly, but stern in inflexible righteousness, terrible to behold in dazzling majesty and whiteness.

The throne is the place of unquestioned authority, the place of absolute power. White speaks of absolute righteousness, unbending holiness. No mixture of mercy is here, no pleas of atoning blood, no advocate, no clemency. Mercy has given over her reins to stern justice. The occupant of that throne is the Lord Jesus, the Judge who never yet has given an unjust sentence. He is impartial. He is righteous. His face, once marked with tenderest love and sympathy, and oftentimes wet with hot tears over the indifference of hardened hearts, is now a face of solemn, dread justice, terrible to behold. Even nature cannot stand that sight. Earth will hasten away from this terrible visage. Heaven will flee away, leaving the resurrected wicked with no refuge, no covering, no shelter, no place to which to lift up their eyes and appeal.

The books will be opened. Grace and mercy have kept these solemn records closed, but now justice demands that

they be brought from the hall of records and their contents disclosed. The book of conscience will be opened. Conscience is God's vicegerent in the human soul. Now the creature must answer as to how he has responded to this great light entrusted to his care. The book of the Law will be opened, "It is written." This book will reveal the broken commandments, transgressions, disobediences, sins of presumption of which human hearts are guilty, the countless times these written oracles of a holy God have been willfully trampled upon by men in acts of lying, idolatry, stealing, covetousness, fornication, adultery, murder, and many other crimes. The book of eternal truth will be opened; the truth and nothing but the truth will be the order of that day. Today, truth is trodden in the streets. At this judgment, truth is exalted and sways the throne.

The Bible will be opened. Men judge it now; it will judge them then. To sit in judgment upon this blessed Book as the critic and Modernist have done is man's greatest folly. This is the sin of past ages; this is the sin of today. If the Bible were allowed to judge our sins, how different our world would be today! How it cries out against our sins! This Book will judge men in the last day (John 12:48).

The book of life will be opened. This will be the register of Heaven, the roll of those who have become children of God by faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Grace wrote down their names when, as poor lost sinners, they received Christ Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

The basis of this judgment is found in Romans 2. Study this all-important chapter. "We are sure," says the apostle—it is not a matter of guesswork or speculation (v. 2)—sure that this judgment will be according to truth, not perjury, graft, political pull, secret society influence, or corruption. The determining factor will be man's treatment of God's goodness. The way men have treated His great blessings,

temporal and spiritual. His goodness that gave His Son to die on Calvary, the goodness that should have led men to repentance.

The basis of judgment will be the works that men have actually done in their lives on earth. Men through sovereign grace today can be saved through *His* works, what Christ actually did for them on Calvary's cross. His works save us, man's own works, being sinful, can only merit eternal doom.

Those who stand before this judgment throne are the dead, those who have died impenitent, having never been born again by the Holy Spirit—the wicked dead; the rich dead; the murderers; the impure; the lawless; the apostate blood-despising dead; every soul who has died outside of Jesus Christ.

They are silent now. The loud-mouthed Ingersoll is silent; the brazen Tom Paine speaks no more; Voltaire has nothing to say. Every mouth is stopped. The whole world stands guilty before God. Arguments have gone. Quibbling is a thing of the past. They listen to hear the Judge of the world banishing them from all light and joy through the eternal ages.

They are trembling. The powers of the world to come shake their sinful bodies as they shudder on the brink of eternal ruin.

The seer of Patmos saw it. May we see before it is forever too late. May it melt our hearts, as we see beforehand the enormity of the sinner's doom.

No record! Where their names might have appeared is only a yawning, hideous blank. God is very careful about His records. There is no annihilation here. Death never means annihilation. The lake of fire is unquenchable fire, it burns forever. There is no escape, no city of refuge to fly to, no Rock of Ages in which to hide. The wicked pass, one by one, before the books. They read the true record of their

sins, sins long since forgotten, sins done in secret, sins done in public, sins against God and against man and themselves. All that seems to break the dread silence is the rustling of the leaves, as they are turned over revealing the guilt of these who must be cast forever into the lake of fire.

CHAPTER 24

THE NEW JERUSALEM

SEVEN PERFECTIONS THAT WILL CHARACTERIZE THE HOLY CITY IN THE AGES OF AGES

It is generally agreed by most Bible students that in Revelation 21 the eternal state is in view. Here we stand on the shores of that great ocean of eternity. Time is no more; eternity has begun. "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." At the very beginning of Genesis we learn of the Almighty making new heavens and a new earth. These had been ruined by sin and rebellion. They had been created perfect and complete. But this perfection and beauty were lost, and the Almighty made again new heavens and a new earth. He did not recreate them, but remodeled this ruined creation. So here in Revelation 21 entirely new heavens and earth are not necessarily implied, but a remodeling of a creation ruined by ages of sin and revolt against His throne. What a world it will be, after all its hateful history, after all its dispensations of greed, war, crime, and uncountable tragedies! The old will be purged by fire, and cleared of all the debris of sin, and will come forth fresh and new from the Refiner's hand (2 Pet. 3:10-13). There will be no more sea, no more storms or gales to plunge our souls in dreadful gloom. It has gone forever. There will be no more sinfulness. The city John beheld coming down out of Heaven was a holy city. God dwells in this city and there can be no sin where God dwells. This city is blessed with the permanent presence of God.

The New Jerusalem is the "Lamb's wife"—all the redeemed who were, one thousand years before, the Lamb's Bride. There has been no estrangement. After one thousand years of millennial happiness, the longest honeymoon ever known, His love for her has still its same fervor. The same heart still cherishes her and she is still His Bride.

There will be no loneliness in the New Jerusalem. God dwells with men. His presence will bring blessed companionship, realization of His ownership, the consciousness of His person. God's presence will create an absence of five things that now distress the Lord's people (v. 4) :

There will be an absence of tears. The presence of sin brought tears. Listening to the voice of Satan brought tears. Since then we have had a weeping world. Yes, tears shall cease and cease for evermore. Tears cannot abide where God or Christ are present.

Death will be absent. We shall witness no more dying struggles. There will be no calls to gather around deathbeds to wish our departing loved ones the last, sad farewell; no hands of the dying to clasp. The king of terrors has been dethroned, and life eternal, immortality unending, and incorruption everlasting—this blessed trinity of good—reign supreme.

Sorrow will be missing. That silent, invisible grief that breaks the human heart, that heaves our breasts with heavy sighs and sobs, that eats like a gnawing cancer at our hearts will all be gone. Here the sorrows of earth are gone, the sad look, the aching heart, the sense of being crushed and alone, our heartaches and griefs will have passed away like a dream of the night.

Crying shall cease. No outspoken sorrow expressed in cries of lamentations. The cries of the wronged and oppressed are heard no more; the cries of the mother in travail have been forever hushed. Outbursts of uncontrollable grief

and vexation of spirit have ceased. These can never exist where God dwells, for in His presence there is fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore (Psa. 16:11).

Pain shall cease. There will be no more aching limbs, no dread arthritis, no painful cancers or painful leprosy, no more the pangs of sorrow, no more the pains of death. The body, now in its glorified state, is forever immune to distressing pain. Let those who lie on beds of pain and suffering take fresh courage. The day will come when pains will be over, we'll sin and sigh no more. We shall be satisfied when we awake in His likeness.

John is then borne by an angel to a great, high mountain from which he surveys the masterpiece of all ages, the Holy City. The Lamb's Wife, formerly His Bride, is symbolized by this city.

It is a great city. Its greatness has never been equalled. The great cities of the past with all their wonders, Babylon, Rome, Nineveh, and hundreds more sink into insignificance when compared with this one.

It will be a holy city, unlike the earthly Jerusalem, although this will be restored when its Messiah returns. This New Jerusalem is free from all taint of sin, all forms of vice and iniquity. Its inhabitants breathe the pure air of absolute holiness and inflexible righteousness.

It will be a heavenly city. Its origin is heavenly. This city must not be confused with the earthly Jerusalem to be restored when Jesus comes.

It will be a glorious city. Her glory is indescribable, and symbols are used to convey to our poor hearts the radiant glories that flood this city emanating from the nature of God. Her light is symbolized by a stone most precious, even like the jasper stone. The seer sees the occupant of the throne like unto a jasper stone. The city receives its glory from God,

who sits upon that throne. The jasper tells out its permanence, stability, and preciousness, its worth and infinite value. It speaks of the clearness and purity of the Church. The seven lights of Asia have long ago failed, but this light will never fail. Now the glorified Church shines in undimmed glory through eternal ages. No shadows of neglect or failure veil her radiant glory.

It will be a protected city (v. 12). Here in this wonderful city, the masterpiece and wonder of the universe, the massive walls show forth its eternal security. Inside those walls all are eternally safe, no foe can ever scale their heights, no sin can ever force a passage beyond those impregnable barriers, the king of terrors can never seize his would-be victims, the forces of disease and corruption must stay outside these impassable enclosures.

There are twelve gates that give entrance to this glorious city. The gates are guarded by angels. They are the guardians and sentinels who faithfully watch the Holy City.

This city is a measured city, measured by the golden reed, measured by the majesty of God. It meets all God's requirements, and answers to all the stern demands of the holiness of God. Once in our iron chains of guilt we came far short, now through matchless grace we more than meet the stern, exacting standards of God's throne through the merits of the blood of the Lamb. The city lieth foursquare. This tells to our finite minds how the Church shall be viewed forever. Viewed today, the Church has need to bow her head in shame for her failure and unevenness. In this New Jerusalem her failures are all gone. Here the Church is seen without spot or wrinkle. There is no sin or failure. She is perfect in all her ways, conformed to all the will of God.

The size of the city is given. There will be room for everybody, none need perish. This city will be big enough for every poor, lost sinner who will trust in Jesus Christ.

There are many who will try to hinder you from going to Heaven. Trust Christ, His cross embraces all (John 12:32). Yes, all who will may enter and enjoy its celestial joys and eternal happiness.

Its street will be made of gold (v. 21). It is not *like* unto, but real. No counterfeits are seen in the New Jerusalem. Gold will be beneath our feet. It will be then in its right place. When gold is in our heart it makes Judases of us; when it is in our hands then it makes Demases of us. Here we will tread on it; it will be in the place where God intends it should be. Gold is a good servant, but a bad master. Gold in itself does no wrong, but that burning passion that burns like a fire in the human breast has caused all through the history of man countless tragedies and murders without number (1 Tim. 6:10). As we walk this street of gold we shall see the reflections in all God's children of what His grace has wrought, reflecting our walk and ways in the perfect will of God. As we pass one another on the street of gold we shall see one another in the likeness of Christ. Our perfect eternal standing will be reflected by this gold like transparent glass, based on the perfect righteousness of God Himself. The Epistle to the Romans emphasizes this standing.

John saw no temple in this New Jerusalem. All distinctions and partition walls are gone, gone through the blood of the Cross. There is now perfect access, and God's Shekinah presence fills every part of the city. God and the Lamb will be our Temple, and at last we dwell in them. They satisfy our heart, and perfect worship flows out unhindered to God and the Lamb.

The city needs no artificial light or solar light because the uncreated Light shines in it. It needs no borrowed light from earth, for the Light of that world is Jesus. They never behold any of earth's creeping shadows, no sunsets or darken-

ing skies, twilights are no more, clouds never appear, morn or night are known no more, the eternal unchanging uncreated light of the presence of the Lamb, of the Lord Jesus in His sacrificial glory fills the wonderful city.

Its inhabitants never know the least taint of sin or any defiling influences. No depraved natures can enter its gates of pearl, no Tempter ever makes his presence felt.

But the story is not yet fully told, the vision not complete. The seer now is shown some more delights and startling sights of the New Jerusalem (chap. 22). A glorious river now bursts on the startled gaze of the seer of Patmos—one more dazzling sight, one more blaze of glory. "He shewed me a pure river of water of life." The river is life. It brings life and blessing wherever it flows. It makes glad the city of our God (Psa. 46:4).

The river is pure. No muddy streams of earth are here, but the water is clear as crystal, bringing perfect satisfaction to all who partake of its blessed purity.

The river is flowing. No stagnation is found here. Proceeding from God's throne, calmly and peacefully it flows through the scenes of Glory to bless the hearts of men with the blessings that come from the heart of a bountiful God.

On both sides of this river this tree of life grows. Here no tempting Serpent waits to seduce, the Serpent has long since gone to his eternal doom.

The careful reader of chapter 22 will notice that seven perfect things are mentioned. In fact, perfection is the key to this closing chapter of Revelation.

There is *perfect access*. "On either side" was the tree of life. There will be no hindrance, no flaming sword to bar our path, no cherubim to debar us, the tree is easy of access no matter in what way it is approached. How different from the paradise of Eden! Sin entered and at that moment man became an outcast and the way to the tree of life was barred.

There will be *perfect blessing*—no more curse. Since the creature of Eden sinned, the realm of this vast creation has been cursed. Since then, more curses have appeared. Added to the curse of the Fall have come the curse of a broken law, and many more. Here in this timeless scene no curse can ever appear or lift up its ugly head. Why no more curse? Because the curses of this creation have all been borne by Christ Jesus, who became a curse for us.

There will be *perfect government*. "The throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it." The cause of the unrest and misrule on earth today is that men refuse to acknowledge this throne of the universe. History is but a mass of records corroborating this view. What a sorry spectacle this sad world presents to us, proving man's incompetency to rule without the aid of the Almighty! Here God will rule supreme. Here the Lamb will rule supreme. The hands of man are entrusted with rule no more. The Devil has had it wrenched from his grasp. God and the Lamb reign omnipotent, and at last there is perfect government which endures forever and forever.

There will be *perfect service*. "His servants shall serve him." There are not many who serve the Lord Christ today. Of the few who do serve Him or try to serve Him, many feel deeply that their service, at its very best, comes far short of perfection. In this life some serve God for sordid gain, some for selfish interests, some for an empty name. There we will serve our God perfectly; self and the proud flesh will be gone. Singleness of purpose will move our happy hearts and out of love for our God our glorified bodies will be presented, moment by moment, in perfect service to Him.

There will be *perfect communion*. "They shall see his face." Here the face of deity will be seen—the Father's face gazed upon with rapturous delight and the face of the Son seen in all its glory. In this New Jerusalem, everyone will

see His face. There will be no cloud between, no shadows of earth, no blinding tears to hide the vision (1 Cor. 13:12).

There will be *perfect resemblance*. "His name shall be in their foreheads." The name implies what a person is. Eternal resemblance to our Lord and eternal ownership are here inferred. When we see Him, we shall be like Him (1 John 3:1-3). We will be like unto our Lord physically. First Corinthians 15 discusses this blessed prospect. We will be like our Lord morally, the old nature will be gone forever and we shall think like Christ, act like Christ, walk like Christ, in all our words and deeds forever. We shall enjoy this glorious change for all eternity. We may be very unlike Him now, but when He appears, then all will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Others may see very little of His resemblance in us today, but in the New Jerusalem we shall each individually manifest the graces which have made His name so glorious to us all here on earth.

There will be *perfect glory*. "No night there." There will be no more sunsets, no hideous shadows, no blackouts, no dark and lonely nights. These have forever passed away. They need no candle, no manufactured light, they need not even the light of the sun, starlight, or moonlight, for the Lord giveth them light. We shall be dependent upon Him Himself, and not upon His works. We shall enjoy the Blessor more than His blessings, and with Him we shall reign forever and ever as His Bride and co-ruler. Crowns of gold will adorn our brows; rich gifts will fill our hands; gratitude, homage, and worship will fill all our hearts. Thus God shall be all in all throughout eternal ages.